

REVITALIZING THE YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF NORTH KERALA
OF THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA AND DIRECTING THIS MINISTRY
TOWARDS RELEVANT AND PLANNED SOCIAL CHANGE

A Professional Project
Presented to
The Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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May 1978

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ABSTRACT

Youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala of the Church of South India is still in an infant stage even after thirty years of integrated ministry. Many young people feel neglected, driven away and forsaken by the elders. Their deep human needs are not cared for. They believe that they are vehemently criticised for everything. Elders think that the young generation is in the wreck of morality and spirituality. Their opinions and suggestions are considered idealistic and ultramodern. They are considered to be irresponsible and careless to age old truths. Youth ministry in the diocese as in other parts of the global community is passing through this dilemma. The purpose of my investigation, therefore, is to find a way out for the youth ministry from this degenerated state of life and work, and to channel the renewed creativity of the youth to introduce innovations in both the church and society.

In chapter 1 there is a brief description of the origin and development of the youth ministry before and after the inception of the Diocese of North Kerala in 1947. I have conducted a detailed study on the objectives, life and work of the youth ministry. In chapter 2 I have tried to evaluate the youth ministry. An informal study conducted through questionnaire has also helped me to assess the shortcomings and weaknesses and strengths of the existing youth ministry. This is followed by a study on the basic causes for these shortcomings. Then, I have put forward methods for revitalization of the youth ministry in the diocese. Here the Youth Fellowship in central and local levels will be

a 'covenant community' where the members will jointly work for the progress of the Fellowship and for the implementation of its high ideals in the life of the church and society.

I have designed chapter 3 with the objective of implementing the new ideals of the revitalized youth ministry in the life of the churches in the Diocese of North Kerala in the field of social witness. With a definition of social witness I have narrated the existing forms of social witness in the churches of the diocese. A critical evaluation of them has pointed to the strengths as well as to the limitations and failures of the social witness. I have, therefore, proposed that innovation within the churches is necessary and that the young people will be the innovators. The innovated churches, then, can be the centres of the would-be social change.

Indian societies are in a state of stagnation even though changes are taking place in this age of space technology and industrialization. These changes may be called 'natural evolution' or planned changes and they are the by-products of advanced sciences. They have failed to bring about organization in persons, families and societies. I want to state it clearly in chapter 4 that the consequences of social, political, educational, and economic issues are so severe that societies are losing their equilibrium. An evaluation of the same has made it clear that there is an urgency for relevant and planned social change in our societies. I have set apart chapter 5 to propose that the youth ministry may be directed to achieve relevant and planned social change. The youth may work through the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations for temporary and lasting changes guided by the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ coupled with his vicarious suffering for the redemption of mankind.

INTRODUCTION

The very alarming question of our century and modern society is concerning our young generation. Very often young people have been criticized for being revolutionary, destructive, rebellious, and vagabond. Church leaders often look at them as idle and condemn their opinions as idealistic and imaginary. While parents are dissatisfied with their children's way of life, companionship and irresponsible actions, adult leaders in congregations are suspecting that they are dealing with a 'new breed'. On the other hand, young people express themselves in many puzzling ways. But, we, the adults are unable to feel their pulse, speak in their language and stand in their shoes. They try to express their deep human needs; but these inarticulate cries are often mistaken for something else. They feel neglected, driven away and thrown out from the sophisticated and power-oriented societies. Even the Christian youth are not an exception to this dilemma. This is the first phase of my project. The second phase is concerning the problematic situation of the society in which the youth are part and parcel. Human beings are subjected to transition from birth till death. Changes that are natural and intentional happen in every society and try to balance the ongoing functioning of the society. These changes known as 'natural evolution' and planned changes are the by-products of industrialization, urbanization, western education, inventions, space technology, etc. But, these changes, when left to their operations have caused disorganization in persons, families and societies. It is a fact that disorganization continues everywhere. Crimes of different natures, sexual mis-

chieves, injustice and inequality in every field, political corruption, beggary, juvenile delinquency, etc. have very much threatened the smooth running of our societies.

STATEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF THESE PROBLEMS

A handful of questions, therefore, is in the minds of those who sincerely care about young people. How are we going to deal with our young generation? What should be the give-and-take policy of the older people in our church with their young people? How can we feel their pulse and understand their disguised pleas for direction and assistance? Will it ever be possible to bridge the gap of understanding between the older and young generations in our church? Are the Christian youth creative enough? If so, can we regenerate them to be responsible citizens in church and society? In answering these relevant questions, I have set apart chapters 1 and 2 to deal with the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala of the Church of South India. In order to study the real problem that confronts us, a critical evaluation of the existing youth ministry in the diocese is very essential. It is proved very clearly that the weaknesses and short-comings of the youth ministry are so grave that it cannot stand the test of the times. Compared to the youth ministry of other denominations, our youth ministry is far behind in its ideals, in implementing them and in responding to the current issues in society. The youth ministry is not even capable of serving the needs, feelings and ideals of its own members. Then, how can it serve the church and society in a better way? Will it be possible to regenerate the youth ministry in the diocese in order to meet

its own needs and the needs of the church and society? I have, therefore, conducted an investigation in order to analyse the way in which the youth ministry could be regenerated. The second and third parts of my second chapter deal with a hypothetical study as to the revitalization of the diocesan youth ministry. What are the basic causes for short-comings? What should be the methods of revitalization of the existing youth ministry? Will these methods suffice to meet the need? Shall we succeed in engraving in the hearts of the youth the wisdom from God? "Remember also your creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"¹

Another important problem that is closely related to the issue of the degenerated state of the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala is the indifference of the church to society. In order to state this problem clearly, I have defined social witness and explained the relationship the church ought to have with society. A critical evaluation of the existing forms of social witness in our churches is necessary. This will bring us face to face with the short-comings, failures and limitations of the existing social witness. Then I propose in the third chapter to study the necessity for innovation in our churches concerning social witness and to investigate the ways in which innovation can be brought about. Will it be possible to innovate our churches satisfactorily for adequate social witness? Can we make use of

¹ Eccles. 12:1.

the youth who are in the on-going process of revitalization to innovate the churches? Will the youth succeed in utilizing the innovated churches as centres of social change?

The next important problem that I want to study at length is the magnitude of social disorganization. An analysis of the existing social, economic and hygienic problems, educational issues, political corruption, injustice and inequality in our societies will reveal the real disorganization in persons, families and societies. Chapter 4 deals with all these issues and their consequences in society. This brings us face to face with the genuine question: How can we eradicate these social ills and bring about organization in persons, families and societies? Are we justified in saying that there is an urgency for relevant and planned social change? If so, will it suffice to meet the need? Who will take up the role as social change agents? The purpose of my investigation is to study the possibilities of directing the revitalized youth ministry in the diocese for attaining relevant and planned social change. I have set apart chapter 5 to relate the different aspects of my investigation to this purpose. Will the Christian youth in the Diocese of North Kerala be able to work as capable social change agents? What would be the appropriate methods the youth might adopt for adequate social change? In order to work as ~~social change~~ agents, the Christian youth might organize 'interfaith associations,' utilize all available resources and give priority to these fields of action. The proposed social change might be a continuing process. It should have goals that would solve our problems in social, economic, political fields, etc. Social change might not only include temporary and urgent social relief,

but it should also concentrate on lasting social reforms.

The first part of my thesis is limited to the youth ministry in my diocese - ministry among the teen-agers (13 - 15 years) in Sunday School, the young men and women (16 - 35 years) in Youth Fellowship and the young women (upto 35 years) in Women's Fellowship. For a careful analysis of the diverse qualities and attitudes of the Christian youth, I have described the youth ministry that existed in independent forms before the Church Union in 1947. This is followed by a critical evaluation to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the existing youth ministry. In assessing the magnitude of disorganization in society, I have limited it to the societies of which our churches are a part. The proposed goals of social change are also limited to the present social ills.

METHODOLOGY

In this research I have adopted three methods. First of all, my work is based on personal observation and intimate relationship with certain Youth Fellowships. I am still working with the local Youth Fellowship, Women's Fellowship and Sunday School. This working knowledge has helped me to go through the strengths and weaknesses of the youth ministry. There is only a very limited literature on the life and work of the diocesan Youth Ministry. I have, therefore, made use of a second method, collecting necessary information and opinion through interviews and an informal questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is appended at the close of the paper. I have sent this questionnaire to 50 Youth Fellowships in the diocese and 33 of them have responded by

giving me necessary information. I have also personally contacted two Women's Fellowship Workers and they have furnished the required information through a questionnaire prepared by me. I have interviewed the Bishop of the diocese, who is also the chairman of the Diocesan Youth and Children's Board, almost all the youth workers of the diocese, as well as General Secretaries and other officers related to youth and children's work. For a comparative study of the diocesan youth ministry with that of other denominations, I have interviewed youth and social workers from the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Syrian Church, Mar Thoma Church and India Evangelical Lutheran Church.

For developing the second part of my project, I have gone through relevant literature in the field of Indian social sciences. Gurumukh Madan, who is an authority in Indian social sciences, has very clearly stated the existing social, economic, educational, and political issues that threaten the equilibrium of Indian society and has pointed to the urgency for relevant social change. I follow his line of thought in developing this part. I have also made use of some important literature prepared by the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society.

Chapter 1

YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF NORTH KERALA

In order to describe the existing youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala, I would like to present a background picture on India and Kerala State. It is very essential to give a short narration on the Church of South India too. The description of the youth ministry in the diocese begins with its origin, passes through its different stages before and after the union, and culminates in an evaluation.

BACKGROUND - INDIA AND KERALA STATE

India, a sub-continent, took its name from the river Indus which flows through the north-west of India. India, that lies "to the north of the equator between 8°-4' to 37°-6' north latitude and 68°-7' to 97°-25' east longitude" has a "total land area of 3280483 sq.km."¹ The first specie of the human family supposed to have lived 14 million years ago has been traced from the specimens that have been recovered from the Siwalik hills on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, the northern border of India.²

Cultural and Social Aspects of India

"India is a multi-coloured sub-continent with varied culture,

¹"The Country," in India, Eleventh Yearbook of the Manorama, Part IV (Kottayam: Manorama Publishing House, 1976), p. 355.

²Ibid., p. 362.

climate, religion,"³ yet its "civilization has marched with common objectives of culture and society."⁴ The cultural heritage of India goes back to B.C. 4000 - 2000 where it can be proud of the Indus Valley Civilization. Indian history teaches us the rise and fall of different dynasties and kingdoms and their contributions to Indian culture. The attempt to unify India and its civilization around a common culture was successful during the periods of emperors like Ashoka. Indian culture and civilization had been progressing during the Hindu period and during the spread of Buddhism and Islam in India. On the whole, in those times, Indian culture "brought about integration among different classes of society through common ideological and political thinking."⁵ But the negative aspect of Indian culture was that after some time people belonging to each sub-culture wanted to cling on to every minute element in their culture. Each culture was isolated from others and inter-relatedness among the cultures was very negligible. This was intensified by the Britishers who "launched a number of disintegrating measures to fritter away the common points among various religions, communities, castes and classes in the country"⁶ during their colonial rule. A remarkable change is evident since independence as India is moving on a secular constitution and ensuring equal rights to all its citizens irrespective of caste, creed, religion or sex. This gives the right to persons to protect and develop their local and regional cul-

³B. N. Ahuja, Spot Essays (New Delhi: Varma Brothers, 1976), p. 129.

⁴Ibid., p. 82.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

tures. Besides, the Government is taking numerous steps to encourage national integration in arts and cultures. Western civilization has also made its input to enrich our culture. But the common man should be educated to cross the cultural barriers and to appreciate the important characteristics of other cultures.

Since independence India is passing through a critical developmental period with its 620 million people. The average density of population per sq.km. is 178. The percentage of national literacy is 29.45.⁷ The death rate per thousand declined from 36.3 to 18.9 whereas the birth rate dropped from 46.4 to 41.2 only.⁸ "Malnutrition is one of the major factors, responsible for the high mortality and morbidity rates in India."⁹ In addition to these factors, economic issues, the unemployment problem, the caste system, the inefficient educational system, etc. have made the social scene in India a complex one. Injustice, inequality, inferiority of women, and a handful of social vices form another phase of the social scene. Rigidity in the structures of society along with stereotyped methods of implementation of social welfare schemes prevents the growth of societies in India. The maintenance of law and order, collection of revenues and protection against external aggression were the major responsibilities of the State in olden days. The welfare of the people was looked after primarily by

⁷"Geography," in India, Eighteenth Yearbook of the Manorama (Malayalam) (Kottayam: Manorama Publishing House, 1976), p. 300.

⁸"The Country," p. 367.

⁹Ibid., p. 574.

joint families, caste groups, village communities, and secondarily by voluntary organizations. Ahuja stated:

With the advent of Independence, a more positive role for the social and economic development of the country has been envisaged for the State and social welfare is receiving increasing importance from the Government.¹⁰

The welfare of the Indian societies depends upon the mutual understanding and co-operation of the State and voluntary organizations in carrying out social services.

Religious and Political Scene in India

The major religious communities of India are the Hindus (82.72 %), Muslims (11.21 %), Christians (2.6 %), Sikhs (1.89 %), Buddhists (0.7 %), Jains (0.47 %), and Zorastrians according to 1971 Census.¹¹ Hinduism, that has brilliantly knit together Aryan and non-Aryan ideas, is considered to be the national religion. "This ability to adopt or adjust alien ideas, has made Hinduism, a highly receptive and tolerant religion."¹² Every religion in India, especially Christianity, is working for the salvation of the human soul. Since they give greater emphasis on the spiritual life of every person who is in their fold, they are satisfied in not attending to the day-to-day physical aspect of his or her life and the social issues with which he or she is confronted. The salvation that the Western missions proclaimed and that which the Indian church continues to proclaim is the

¹⁰Ahuja, p. 87.

¹¹"Major Religious Communities," in India, p. 377.

¹²"Religions," in India, p. 375.

salvation of the individual, which is also thought to fulfil the social responsibility of the mission.¹³ The first three major religions in India believe that as they are concentrating on the individual salvation of their believers, their whole service to humanity based on their Scripture and faith is over. In this respect a resurgence and revision in religious thinking and administration is very essential for the welfare of the societies in India.

When India became free, the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India were the only two national political parties. During the twenty-five years since independence endless proliferation in the political field has resulted in the emergence of a hundred and odd political parties, out of which sixteen are the major ones. It will only be fair to say that none of the political parties, at present, is honestly working for justice and equality for the common people. Their interest in raising the standard of living of the poor is very negligible. They make use of their talents and energy in fighting for survival and for vested interests. We fought for independence through the non-violent method of Sri. Mahatma Gandhi but we have dehumanised our precious gift of democracy. "It is an encouraging feature that most people seek the enduring solution of communal problems of our country in strengthening the secular character of India."¹⁴ This means that in a genuine secular state the politics should be free of religion. But in effect as religious, political, social, and economic issues in India are almost inter-related, it would not advance genuine secularism.

¹³"Reality 2," Church and Social Justice (December 1975), 19.

¹⁴Ahuja, p. 84.

Remarks on Kerala State

Kerala is a small state, situated in the south-west corner of India. Kerala State came into existence on 1st November, 1956, uniting Travancore-Cochin State and Malabar. Its total area of 38864 sq.km. supports a population of 23.22 million people. This disproportion between its area and population has given rise to the highest density of 549 persons per sq.km.¹⁵ The death rate per thousand dropped from 29.1 to 9.4 while the birth rate declined only from 40 to 32.1 during the period of 1931 to 1972.¹⁶ "Kerala has always led and still leads all other States of India in literacy with 60.16 percent literates."¹⁷ Malayalam is the mother tongue of the people of Kerala State and is considered to be the official language too. Tea, coffee, rubber, and spices are the chief plantation crops of Kerala and those account for 7 percent of the total value of the agricultural produce of the State.

According to the ancient history of Kerala it had inhabitants even from B.C. 4000. Christianity came to Kerala as early as A.D. 52 with the arrival of St. Thomas. The percentage distribution of Hindus, Muslims and Christians according to the 1971 census is 59.41, 19.50, 21.05 respectively.¹⁸ "All these communities maintain their own separate religious-cum-social separatism, based on religion, caste and social

¹⁵"Geography," p. 504.

¹⁶"Kerala," in India, p. 653.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸"Major Religious Communities," p. 378.

status."¹⁹ And politics in Kerala has the peculiar character of weatherlike changing since the formation of the State.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH KERALA

With the background sketch on India and Kerala State already drawn, it is now very fitting to describe, in brief, the Church of South India and the Diocese of North Kerala.

Background - Church of South India and its Contributions

September 27, 1947 was a golden letter day in the history of the Church, because on that day the Episcopal and non-Episcopal Churches united to form one Church for the first time known as the Church of South India. The Methodist Church in India, Burma and Ceylon, the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, and the South India United Church were the partners in this United Church. A new, united and autonomous Church, having a strength of one million, five hundred thousand Christians, representing the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Methodists came into existence in South India.²⁰ The declaration of independence for India one and a half months before the union and the coming into existence of the World Council of Churches in 1948 strengthened the Church of South India in carrying out an united

¹⁹P. J. Alexander, "Towards Understanding the Kerala Background," in Church, Society and State in Kerala, (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), p. 18.

²⁰T. B. Benjamin, "First Twenty-five Years of the C.S.I.," in C.S.I. North Kerala Diocesan Youth Fellowship, Silver Jubilee Souvenir, 1948-'73, (Cochin: Mar Louis Memorial Press, 1973), p. 32.

Christian witness in India.

It is appropriate to study the contributions of the Church of South India to the global Church and to the life of the people in India. The Rt.Rev.T.B.Benjamin, Bishop in the Diocese of North Kerala, has described the four main contributions of the C.S.I.namely, 'a pattern for church union,' 'a new concept of Episcopacy,' 'new forms of worship,' and 'ministry of the laity.'²¹ It is a matter of great appreciation that the Church of South India has set an example for a workable plan for church union. "The first and foremost concern of the C.S.I.has been ever since the beginning, wider union."²² The C.S.I.is in full communion with the Mar Thoma Syrian Church and the Church of North India. The effects of the union have made a great impression on the Evangelical Lutheran Church and negotiations for union between the Lutheran Church and the C.S.I.are in good progress. The C.S.I.is developing a new concept of Episcopacy because "it accepts historic Episcopacy" in a constitutional form "without accepting the doctrine of apostolic succession."²³ Bishop Benjamin stated:

The Bishop in the C.S.I.is not a Lord, but a chief pastor. He lives a simple life among the people trying to enter into personal relationship with them, leading them and guiding them.²⁴

The Synod Liturgy Committee of the C.S.I.has been faithfully engaged in producing varieties of forms of services for experimental

²¹Ibid., pp. 32-33.

²²Rajaiah D. Paul, Ecumenism in Action: A Historical Survey of the Church of South India (Madras : Christian Literature Society, 1972), p. 25.

²³Ibid., p. 14.

²⁴Benjamin, p. 33.

and optional use in our churches, but taking into consideration the spiritual riches of the uniting churches. R. D. Paul remarked:

One of the memorable occasions at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston was when the C.S.I. Liturgy was celebrated in the First Methodist Church, in the presence of a huge congregation. The comments which were made by religious news papers about the service showed that the service made a tremendous spiritual impression.²⁵

The Church of South India is known for giving deserving place to the ministry of the laity in the life of the church. Dettman stated:

To be sure, the Constitution of the Church of South India, based as it was, upon the belief in 'the priesthood of all believers,' provided for a high degree of lay participation in the life of the new United Church,²⁶

Both men and women are encouraged to make use of their talents either in full time service of the church in ministries such as education, evangelism, healing, etc. or in part-time or honorary service like running Sunday School and participating in lay preaching, youth work and social welfare. In short, Bishop Benjamin summed up:

The Church Union in South India set before the Christian people the conception of the Church, as one body - in ideal, if not in actual practice - with one life, one faith, and one mission to the world.²⁷

Special Features of the Diocese

The Diocese of North Kerala is, to a certain extent, distinct

²⁵Paul, p. 34.

²⁶Paul R. Dettman, The Forgotten Man (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1967), p.46.

²⁷Benjamin, p. 32.

from other dioceses of the C.S.I. in its composition, life and work.

Composition. The Diocese of North Kerala represents the real union of the Episcopal and non-Episcopal Churches. The churches established and run by the Basel Evangelical Mission of the Presbyterian tradition and the Church Missionary Society of the Anglican tradition were partners to the union. The work of the Basel Mission started in Malabar, the northern part of the diocese when Rev. Samuel Hebach, J.C. Lehner and C.L. Greiner landed at Calicut on October 14, 1834.²⁸ Dr. H. Gundert was one of the pioneer missionaries worked in Malabar as early as 1839. The Church Missionary Society began its work in North Kerala when Thomas Dawson arrived at Cochin in 1817. The mission centre was changed from Cochin to Trichur and the area of the C.M.S. was under the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin. Both missionary societies established churches, schools and colleges, hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable institutions and worked in mutual understanding and co-operation in North Kerala. World war I and the capture of the German missionaries considerably affected the Malabar Basel Mission churches especially in financial matters and they were compelled to join the South India United Church in 1919. The Malabar Church Council resolved:

The Malabar Church as one of the constituting church of the S.I.U.C. accepts the proposed scheme of 1942 and enters

²⁸G. N. Thomssen, Samuel Hebach of India (Cuttack: Orissa Mission Press, 1905), p. 26.

into the larger union to be termed as 'the Church of South India'.²⁹

The Diocese of North Kerala, therefore, was formed as one of the dioceses of the Church of South India on September 27, 1947, uniting Alwaye and Munnar districts, Cochin State and British Cochin of the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin and the Basel Mission Church in Malabar. Wynaad, that was formerly a field of the Anglican Mission of the Diocese of Mysore was also included in the North Kerala Diocese. The total number of baptized persons in the diocese at the time of formation was 21000. The diocese is divided into three districts, namely Malabar, Trichur, and Wynaad. The union that occurred in the diocese between the Presbyterians and the Anglicans is considered to be a special feature of the diocese in its composition. Such a union is not a common feature of the other dioceses in the C.S.I. In the dioceses wherever such a union has taken place, it is a very encouraging factor for testing the validity of real union. The geographical area of the Diocese of North Kerala is composed of Cannanore, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Palghat, Trichur, and Ernakulam districts. The total area of 22882 sq. km. holds a population of 12.30 million people.³⁰

Life and work. The life and work of the churches in the Basel Mission and Anglican areas before the union was almost identical in many respects. Divine service, Sunday School, youth organization, women's organization, cottage prayer on week days, and evangelistic

²⁹K. M. Thampan, "A Study of Factionalism in the Church with Special Reference to the C.S.I. Dioceses in Kerala" (unpublished Bachelor's dissertation, United Theological College, 1968), p. 39.

³⁰"Kerala," p. 655.

work were the routine activities of both these churches. The churches in the Basel Mission area used to have only three Holy Communion services in a year whereas those in the C.M.S. area had monthly Holy Communion services. Basel Mission churches had Sunday afternoon service called Catechism classes for boys and girls upto 16 years of age.

Since the union the life of the churches in the diocese has improved considerably. The number of congregations has increased along with the increase of presbyters, deacons and lay-workers. The President of the Malabar District Church Council reported:

We have Sunday services, mid-week services, revival meetings, special Bible classes, retreats, Sunday Schools, Youth Associations, Women's Fellowship and various such spiritual activities in our District.³¹

The churches are reminded, now and then, that their greatest responsibility is in evangelism. The Bishop, Rt. Rev. T.B. Benjamin said:

. . . the supreme task of the Church is evangelism and the one purpose for which we united in the Church of South India is that we should be able to proclaim the Gospel more effectively to the millions of our non-Christian brethren, in this country.³²

Even though there were many unpleasant events and litigations in the diocese since the union, there has been a revival of interest in evangelism in our churches. Almost all the churches conduct evangelistic work during the holidays and partake in carrying on the work among the Hill Tribes in Wynaad, which is the Home Mission Field of the diocese. There is some improvement in the matter of pastoral care,

³¹Proceedings of the North Kerala Diocesan Council, October, 1961, p. 49.

³²Ibid., 1962, p. 4.

and the spiritual and intellectual standard of the pastors is in progress. During 1973 - '75 we had in service 45 pastors and 16 lay workers, 6 women workers, 7 senior men on fixed allowance and 10 part time workers to look after 137 congregations.³³

The work of the diocese is seen mostly in the social concerns of the church. The diocese is running 49 educational institutions, 8 children's homes, technical institutions for boys and girls, one hospital and one dispensary, hostels for working girls, Old People's Home, and 'Kripalayam' for ex-lepers. Most of these institutions and homes are being run with foreign grants while the remaining receive voluntary contributions from the members and wellwishers of the diocese. The church members are conscious of their responsibility to contribute to the charitable institutions of the diocese, and the voluntary contributions have increased to a certain extent. The diocese is distributing scholarships among the deserving students for their college or technical education. On the whole, the life and work of the church in the Diocese of North Kerala is making good progress, even though a considerable amount of time and resources is being spent on litigations to keep up the administration of the diocese and its institutions.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTH MINISTRY

The youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala consists of the ministry among the teen-agers (13 - 15 years) in Sunday School, the young men and women (16 - 35 years) in Youth Fellowship and the young

³³Life and Work of the Church in the Diocese of North Kerala, 1973-1975, p. 3.

women (upto 35 years) in Women's Fellowship. The ministry among the teens in Sunday School is a stepping stone to the ministry that is being done through the Youth Fellowship. The ministry among the senior women in Women's Fellowship will enable them to cultivate a close and inter-personal relationship with young women in the Youth Fellowship as some of the members of the Youth Fellowship ~~are~~ members of the Women's Fellowship too. The lion's share of the youth ministry, therefore, is the ministry among the young men and women in the Youth Fellowship. I would like to see the youth ministry mainly as ministry carried on by the Youth Fellowship for young men and women. So, I will concentrate on the life and work of the Youth Fellowship in the Diocese of North Kerala. The ministry done through the Sunday School and Women's Fellowship is only complementary to the major part of the youth ministry. At present there is no parochial organization for male adults above 35 years.

Before the Union in 1947

It is very appropriate to trace the origin and to narrate the life and work of the youth ministry in the light of its objectives in the Basel Mission and C.M.S. churches prior to the union. Before the coming into existence of the diocese, youth ministry existed in various independent forms in both these missionary areas. Sunday School might have started in both the missionary areas as early as their establishment of churches. Catechisation in the Sunday afternoon in the Basel Mission churches was particularly meant for boys and girls upto 16 years of age. The organizations for young men and women came into existence in the Basel Mission area without further delay and they were

known as 'Young Men's Christian Association' and 'Young Women's Christian Association.' "There are Prayer Unions, Temperance Unions and Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations in almost every station," says the Mission Report.³⁴ In addition to these there existed in Malabar, Christian Endeavour Society, Student Christian Movement, Children's Special Service Mission and India Sunday School Union. Most of these Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. were not affiliated with the Indian Y.M.C.A. or Y.W.C.A. Union. The youth groups in the Anglican diocese were known as Y.M.C.A., Youth League, Christian Endeavour Society, etc. It was recorded in 1932 that "the Report of the Kunnankulam Y.M.C.A. for the past year contains a very useful record of activities."³⁵

Preliminary objectives. Missionaries in both the traditions were aware of the talents and creativity of the young people in their churches. They, therefore, began to run the Sunday School, youth group, Women's Fellowship, etc. The main objective of the youth ministry in the preliminary stage was to educate boys and girls and young men and women in Scripture lessons and to ensure their spiritual growth. Mr. Kuhner, the President of the Young Men's Christian Association at Calicut, had made the following remark in 1901:

. . . the ideal of this Association to bring young men into the fellowship with Christ, may be lost sight of and so we must take care to keep this ideal of the Y.M.C.A. always prominent. We

³⁴Basel German Evangelical Mission in South-western India, 65th Report, 1904, (Mangalore: Basel Mission Press), p. 47.

³⁵H. A. Popley (ed.) The Young Men of India, XLIV (Calcutta: National Council, Young Men's Christian Associations India, Burma and Ceylon, 1932), p. 298.

earnestly hope that in doing so our Association will safely pass through the critical period of its youth and having attained manhood will be a blessing to the population of Calicut in general and to our Calicut - Congregation in particular.³⁶

It is to be noted that they gave utmost importance in bringing young men and women to the fellowship of Christ. It is also clear that to take care of the identity formation in the adolescents was another objective of youth ministry. They also had a wider objective in addition to the salvation of their own souls. "But we would wish to see more of that saving love for others which is the out-come of joyous fruition of full salvation in Christ."³⁷ The objectives of the youth ministry also included the guidance given to the young men and women to use their leisure time creatively and for serving others.

Life and work. As there was no integrated youth ministry in these mission areas before the union, it is rather difficult to trace the life and work of the youth ministry that existed independently in each congregation. Through schools and Sunday Schools the missionaries and church workers at that time were very much interested to look after the spiritual nourishment of children over and above the physical and mental nourishments. "We try to present the Lord Jesus Christ to the students attending our schools and we have nothing better than His salvation to offer to them,"³⁸ records the Basel Mission Report.

³⁶Basel German Evangelical Mission..., 62d Report, 1901, p. 73.

³⁷Ibid., 66th Report, 1905, p. 56.

³⁸Ibid., 73d Report, 1912, p. 56.

According to the Basel Mission Reports, ministry among the youth was centred around the spiritual growth of the young people. It was reported, in the Codacal Church, that "... those young men who regularly attend the Y.M.C.A. meetings, lead a good life and are in the habit of regularly attending the public services."³⁹ In the C.M.S. area "the first Anglican Young Men's Convention was held in 1916 in the C.M.S. College, Kottayam."⁴⁰ This was followed by annual youth conferences. As the conferences were being conducted mainly for the university educated young men, steps were taken to hold youth conferences in Malayalam too for the less educated young men and that proved to be successful. For several years united youth conferences with the Mar Thoma Church Youth Organization were conducted by the initiative of the youth organization in this area. Camp fires, sing song, group discussions, Bible classes, etc. were some of the methods used in enriching the life of the youth ministry.

One of the main activities of the youth organizations in both the missionary areas was evangelisation. "In addition to carrying on their Sunday School work," the members of the Youth Organization in Calicut, "also regularly preach the Word among adults, Christians as well as non-Christians."⁴¹ It was stated in the Mission Report:

³⁹Ibid., 71st Report, 1910, p. 61.

⁴⁰George Koshy, "Youth Work in Travancore and Cochin Anglican Diocese before the Union," in C.S.I. North Kerala Diocesan Youth Fellowship, ... , pp. 35-36.

⁴¹Basel German Evangelical Mission ... , 71st Report, 1910, p. 60.

There is also a Young Women's Association at Melparamba which, though small, regularly gathers for prayer meetings, and last year accomplished something tangible in the shape of a handsome collection for Mission work which they handed over to the pastor.⁴²

"Lantern lectures on religious and social welfare subjects are given" by the members of the Kizhankulam Y.M.C.A. "in the surrounding villages."⁴³ In addition to their evangelistic work, the members of the Y.M.C.A. and the Christian Endeavour Society have nursed the sick and the suffering. It is very evident that the activities of the young people were not limited to evangelistic work. They were engaged in philanthropic work to a certain extent. The young people of that time have set atleast a model for serving the deserving people in society.

When scores of young men and women are willing to take part in Sunday School work; when some of our young men, . . . are found to teach their non-Christian brethren in a night school, without any remuneration, after their day of work, when there are here and there a few Christian men who lend a helping hand to such as would fain join our church and do not know how to set about⁴⁴

It is to be noted especially that the members of the Y.M.C.A. at Calicut included non-Christians.

The South India United Church in which the Basel Mission had emerged emphasized a renewal in youth ministry. The General Assembly had recommended to co-operating Church Councils that they send Sunday School teachers for training, arrange refresher courses for the leaders of the youth, secure experienced Christian Education leaders for re-creating youth ministry and for introducing suitable training to older

⁴²Ibid., p. 63.

⁴³Popley, p. 298.

⁴⁴Basel German Evangelical Mission ... , 73rd Report, 1912, p. 39.

boys and girls.⁴⁵ Now it is evident that youth ministry existed in different forms in almost every congregation. The life and work of the youth ministry was attaining progress; but the emphasis was mainly on the spiritual aspect of life. There were not very many activities being done as an integrated youth ministry. The locally oriented youth ministry generally had a narrow out-look towards church and society.

A New Organization Since 1947 and its Progress in the United Church

As soon as the Diocese of North Kerala came into existence, the youth ministry that existed in both the missionary areas began to integrate. The Youth Fellowships that existed in congregations in different names with independent administration, in 1948 integrated into one organization under the diocese, called 'C.S.I. Youth Fellowship, Diocese of North Kerala.' Similarly, Sunday Schools in each congregation of the diocese joined together under the association termed 'North Kerala Diocesan Sunday School Association.' Women's Fellowship in the diocesan level came into being about the same time. All of these have branches in each congregation. The members in the Youth Fellowship are between 16 to 35 years of age. Non-confirmed teens and adults may join the Fellowship as 'Probationary members' and 'Senior Friends' respectively. The Youth Fellowship has a constitution approved by the Diocesan Council. A constitution for the Women's Fellowship has been approved very recently. The Diocesan Sunday School is working on an approved constitution.

⁴⁵The South India United Church Herald, XXVII (December 1935), 179-180.

Objectives. The objectives of the youth ministry since the union are slightly higher than those in the pre-union period. According to the constitution of the Diocese of North Kerala, it is stated:

The object of the Youth Fellowship is to bring together the young people of the congregations in the diocese under the banner of Jesus Christ ~~that~~ they may grow in spiritual life and vision, to bear witness to their Lord and Saviour and to love His Church.⁴⁶

The motto of the Sunday School is 'saved to serve' with the following aim: "to help children to accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour and thereby to develop Christian stewardship in the family as well as in the Church."⁴⁷ The objects of the Women's Fellowship are:

To unite members in prayer, service and witness; to set an example of true Christian life; to uphold the sanctity and permanence of Christian Marriage; to help mothers in their responsibility for Christian upholding of their children.⁴⁸

These objects make it clear that the most important aim of the youth ministry is to prepare young men and women to accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour. It is believed that the life and work of the youth ministry has to be mainly based on this particular objective.

Life and work. The Diocesan Youth Fellowship is working on the following principles: worship, service, witness, fellowship, general knowledge, and recreation. Almost all the Youth Fellowships and Women's Fellowships meet weekly or once or twice a month. Sunday Schools meet on every Sunday. About 1743 members are attending 87 Youth Fellowships

⁴⁶Church of South India, Constitution of the Diocese of North Kerala, (1964), p. 62.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 70.

⁴⁸North Kerala Diocese, Constitution of the Women's Fellowship, (1976), p. 1.

in the diocese. There are about 1681 members in the Diocesan Women's Fellowship that has 65 branches. About 5853 children including non-Christians are participating in 130 Sunday Schools. For efficient working of the youth ministry we have the 'Diocesan Youth and Children's Board.' The Bishop of the diocese is the president of the Youth Fellowship and the chairman of the Board. The Board meets occasionally and plans the general activities, principles and administration of the Youth Fellowship and the Sunday School. There is one 'Youth and Children's Worker' in the diocesan level who visits each Youth Fellowship and Sunday School and guides them to plan various activities and co-ordinates the life and work of all the Youth Fellowships and Sunday Schools. At present there are three area co-ordinators who are expected to visit Youth Fellowships and Sunday Schools and encourage them in their activities. The main activities of the Youth Fellowships consist of: helping the pastor to run Sunday Schools; helping the church during festivals; involving in the routine activities of the church; attending youth conferences; participating in helping the charitable institutions of the diocese; helping the pastor in evangelistic work. Diocesan Youth Conference is being held once in every year. Regional Conferences also take place in Malabar, Trichur and Wynaad districts yearly. On an average about 20% of the members of the Youth Fellowships attend the conferences having representing almost all the Youth Fellowships in the diocese. The Sunday School children are being divided into the following grades: cradle roll (below 4 years), infant (4-5 years), primary (6-8 years), junior (9-11 years), intermediate (12-14 years), and senior (15-17 years). There are 7 Sunday School unions under the Sunday School Associ-

ation for directing the Sunday Schools for imparting the message to the taste of the children and for efficient functioning of the Sunday Schools. Convening teachers' retreat, children's rally and celebrating the World Sunday School Day are the main functions of the local Sunday School union. Annual examination is also conducted for the Sunday School children in the diocesan level.

The Youth Fellowship celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1973.

"In commemoration of this occasion the Fellowship raised Rs.14000/- to construct a new building at the Old People's Home, Vadakanchery."⁴⁹ A building with five rooms was constructed there with this amount for the use of the old people. Socially-oriented activities are being done by very few Youth Fellowships. St. May's Church Youth Fellowship, Calicut had run a clinic for the poor people for some years with the help of the doctors in the congregation but now it was closed down due to the non-availability of honorary doctors. They have recently started a housing programme for the poor. They have raised a sum of Rs.2000/- and constructed a house for a tailor who was very sick. The youth employed only skilled labourers and did all the manual labour.

Contributions. In general, the diocesan authorities are proud of the life and work of the youth ministry, especially those of the diocesan Youth Fellowship. The youth ministry in the diocese has set examples and made a few contributions to the life of the church. One of the most important contributions of the youth ministry to the life of

⁴⁹Life and Work of the Church in the Diocese of North Kerala, 1973-1975, p. 11.

the church is the example of the integrated ministry. The integration of Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, and Women's Fellowship has succeeded to a great extent to show forth the benefits of integration. Another important contribution of the youth ministry is that it cultivated a new enthusiasm for church-related activities in the minds of the young people. Thirdly, the Youth Fellowship has set a remarkable example for helping the poor and the depressed by raising funds to construct an additional building for the old and the helpless. The next contribution is seen in its efforts to bridge the gap between the old and the young, the young people of two denominations, and the youth in different strata of life. These contributions declare that the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala is progressing to some extent but only within the limits of the diocese.

Chapter 2

PROPOSAL FOR A REVITALIZED YOUTH MINISTRY

In the previous chapter we have already discussed the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala along with a background study on India and Kerala State. We had also seen the composition and the special features of the Diocese of North Kerala for a clear understanding of the youth ministry. We had also drawn up the present position of the youth ministry after narrating its origin and development. In this chapter, I am going to place a proposal for a revitalized youth ministry after a careful evaluation of the existing youth ministry.

AN EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH MINISTRY

Now it is time to evaluate the present youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala. The first step may be to compare it with the existing youth ministry of other denominations within the area of the diocese. I will be limiting it to the Youth Fellowships of various denominations.

Comparison with the Youth Fellowships of other Denominations

'Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam,' the Youth Department of the Mar Thoma Church, has the following objectives. "As well as training in Christian fellowship and service leading to social action,"¹ they work

¹"Youth Department of the Mar Thoma Church," in Relevance, Christian Youth Organisations in India Today (Bangalore: Ecumenical Christian Centre, 1971), p. 64.

on four points, namely: worship, study, witness, and service. Arranging conferences, study programme, political consultations and gatherings of special groups is the common face of the Youth Fellowship. They publish a magazine by the name of 'Yuvadeepam' that has a circulation of 4000 copies. Work camps, youth conventions, leadership training camps, etc. are included in the general activities of the Yuvajana Sakhyam. Social service programmes are mostly done by local Youth Leagues. Building houses for the poor, raising marriage-aid-funds, constructing roads and distributing food are the features of the Social Service Programme.

The youth in the Catholic churches in Calicut with the help and advice from the Jesuit fathers of the Socio-Religious Centre take the initiative for social work. They, along with others who are interested in this field, work mostly among the illiterate, partly employed, low morale fisher-men. In this 'Beach Blossoms Project,' the young people are trying to study the standard of living of the people in one of the colonies of fishermen in Calicut and up-lift their living conditions in all possible ways. Their activities include 'Training local leaders For Development' (T.F.D.), creating 'Social Awareness and Leadership Training' (S.A.L.T.) for college students and rural youth, conducting adult literacy classes for the illiterate, 'ambar charka programme' for training ladies, triple antigen programme for children, saving scheme for the families by their own daily contributions, kitchen garden and supplementary employment for the fishermen, medical check up, aid and advice for the people in the colony and encouraging manual labour. Cultivating a sense of conscientisation in the minds of the oppressed, giving them functional literacy in the words of Paulo Freire and making both

the oppressor and the oppressed to have a touch of reality are the goals to which their activities are focused. The original plan of a scientific project for social action came from some active members of the All India Catholic University Federation.²

The next youth organization for our comparative study is that of the St. George Orthodox Cathedral, Calicut. To ensure social justice and equality to the down-trodden people is the theme of the Orthodox Student Movement of India and the Orthodox Youth Movement. The organization in Calicut started its service in the parish level and continued through the non-Christian sphere. Giving accommodation, food, medicine, and service to the people in the Leprosy Colony in 'Chevayur' is one of the main activities of the youth organization. In June 1976 they started the 'Family Friend Project' to uplift the economic, educational, nutritional, and hygienic conditions of the fishermen and their families at 'Puthiyappa' in Calicut. They are concentrating on temporary and lasting changes for the selected 50 families. Their project includes digging wells, erecting small houses with latrines, giving education to the deserving children, providing supplementary jobs and introducing saving schemes for these families in Puthiyappa. The youth also work for structural changes such as abolishing caste and dowry systems and implementing land reforms.

The young people of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church in Calicut meet monthly for studying the Scripture, discussing social

²Dominic George and Santhanalakshmi, "The Beach Blossoms Story: April 1975 - 1976 August" (Calicut: Socio-Religious Centre, 1976), p. 1. (Unpublished.)

issues and hearing resource persons in different fields. Their social activities include planting of trees, thatching houses for the poor, doing manual labour in constructing houses and extending temporary relief. It is reported that when the youth took over the edition and circulation of the Lutheran Church magazine by name 'Christiani,' the circulation of copies increased.

The Student Christian Movement of India that started about 1900 in North Kerala, is still continuing in the Christian colleges. Worship, group study and socio-religious work are the main areas of concentration of the S.C.M. "S.C.M. members are expected to follow the example of their Master in service to others and especially to the depressed and the underprivileged, poor and hungry."³

Strengths of the Youth Ministry

Evaluating the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala, requires us first to discuss its strengths.

Unity among young people. It is a matter of great appreciation that the young people who are members of the Youth Fellowship are united to one another in thought, word and action. This may not be possible where there are no Youth Fellowships. They are quite aware of the fact that in order to express their idealistic views and put them into practice, they should be united. They are also united because of their similarity in behaviour, life - styles and attitude to social issues.

³"Student Christian Movement of India," in Relevance, Christian Youth Organizations in India Today, p. 52.

Desire for change. The young people are conscious of the fast changes that are taking place in society. Change is visible in political, cultural, economic, social, and scientific fields and also in communication, administration, and international relationships. Change is also taking place in our life - styles, and in esthetic values and priorities. These changes are generally taking place in society according to natural evolution. But planned social change is essential in society and church to correspond with the natural evolution. The Christian youth in our diocese do feel the necessity for planned changes. Pierre has commented that the church was too institutionalised and that young people found that the church was an obstacle to freedom, a block to growth and expansion and a domineering mother coming out of another age.⁴ Our young people feel the same way as Pierre felt and they call for a planned social change on both ecclesiastical and social levels.

A faint vision for the future of the church. It is learned that young people have a vision for the future of the church. But it is faint and idealistic. They are anxious to work out a renewed church capable of meeting the challenges of the changing society. Proper guidance is essential from the leaders of the church for the young people to achieve this goal. The vision is only a faint one because in most congregations of our diocese the youth are not the key persons to mould the future of the church. They are not consulted in making any concrete suggestions for the future of the church. There is a great

⁴Pierre Babin, Adolescents in Search of a New Church (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), p. 13.

revival among the young people in the political field. This is a matter of great encouragement for the Christian youth to develop faint vision for the future of the church.

Short-comings of the Youth Ministry

The youth ministry in the diocese has its own short-comings and weaknesses. Those may be classified as follows.

Lack of spirituality and creativity. The youth are not interested in the stereotyped activities of the church. They do like to have new activities which are relevant to the modern society. As the church is not attending to their idealistic social views, the youth lag behind in their spiritual growth. It is believed that the older people stress spirituality without social creativity, and that the younger people stress social concern without spirituality. While stressing this isolated state of spirituality, the youth, similar to Communist ideologies, believe that service to society may be achieved even without spirituality. Most of them have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour. The older people are vehemently criticising the lack of spirituality among the youth and their socially idealistic views. Even though the youth have higher views, they find it difficult to put them into practice. The youth are not being appreciated for their idealistic views and not given opportunities to implement them. This narrow outlook of the older, the so called spiritual giants of the church, does not cast a model for the youth for spiritual growth. It was reported in the Guardian:

Youth is not likely to be satisfied with mere attendance at worship, it has to be provided with something to do and achieve in order to keep up its interest. When, on rare occasions, youth comes forward to take its share in church life a pastor's non-co-operation kills the enthusiasm.⁵

The youth, therefore, are passing through a state of lack of spirituality and creativity. Almost all the Youth Fellowships in the diocese have pointed out the fact that lack of leadership, local and central, was a major short-coming of the youth ministry. The Diocesan Youth Worker is not always a full time leader and he is being changed very often.

Lack of involvement in community development programmes.

Various community development programmes are taking place in society. The youth who are in the political field are involved in the community development programmes to some extent. But the Christian youth do not get opportunities to participate in them. Moreover they are not sufficiently politically oriented to get into these community development programmes. They think that it is not their role to take part in these programmes. They are satisfied with their limited sphere of life and work. They are of the opinion that as they are a very small minority they cannot influence the general thinking and working of the decision-making people in communities. They do not take the initiative to collect the opinions of the common people and make the community development programmes suitable to the common people. They are also not interested to discuss the importance of these programmes and to evaluate

⁵"The Indian Church: Youth Groups and Churches," Guardian, LXVI (July 15, 1948), 389.

them in their meetings.

Limited participation in social witness. The social witness of the youth is very limited to institutionalised social service. They used to help the charitable institutions of the diocese. They also give temporary relief to persons who are suffering from flood, drought, natural calamities, diseases, etc. These they do jointly with other social organizations or separately. They have only the beginnings of a wider view of social witness. Rajaiah D. Paul has evaluated the reaction of the diocese to the theme 'Church and Society' as follows:

In North Kerala, some groups were set up to study the papers: but what they did was not reported to the Diocesan Secretary, nor did the diocese plan any action.⁶

The youth are aware of the social evils, but they do not take necessary steps to study them at length and eradicate them from church and society. They are also not interested in organizing adult education classes, small peer groups, consciousness raising groups, etc. In comparison with the social witness of the youth groups of other denominations, it is regrettable that our youth groups are far behind in this. In short, only very few young men and women are really interested in the regular meetings. Even the students in most places do not recognise their special role in the life and work of the Fellowship. There is a general laxity among the members, and their participation in social witness is stereotyped and negligible.

⁶Rajaiah D. Paul, Ecumenism in Action: A Historical Survey of the Church of South India (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1972), p. 119.

BASIC CAUSES FOR SHORT-COMINGS

As we have already seen, the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala is in its elementary stage . A quarter of a century in the life of the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala could not bring forth remarkable achievements within itself and in the life of the society. This calls for a revitalized youth ministry. The proposal for a revitalized youth ministry requires us to analyse the basic causes for short-comings. The following reasons are considered to be the basic causes for the short-comings and weaknesses of the members of the Youth Fellowships in our diocese.

Poverty and Unemployment

Poverty and unemployment is a common phase of the general life of our Indian society. This has a direct effect on our young people and about 30% of them are unemployed. So, they are always searching for small jobs. E.J. Edona stated:

Although the percentage of literates stands remarkably high in the Malabar Church and higher education has made steady progress among the members, no economic regeneration such as we find in the Syrian Christian Community has taken place here.⁷

Those who are employed are occupying only small positions and so their income is also very negligible. Both employed and unemployed, therefore, are not interested in supporting the Youth Fellowship financially because both of them are almost identical in their financial

⁷E. J. Edona, The Economic Condition of the Protestant Christians in Malabar with Special Reference to the Basel Mission Church (Calicut: Empire Press, 1940), pp. 94-95.

capacity. Even though the young people in our congregations argue that financial scarcity is the root cause of their lack of interest in the activities of the Fellowship, I am not fully convinced to support the argument. It is true that in some congregations the percentage of the unemployed youth has gone upto 40 - 50 per cent. But the unemployment and financial scarcity are not the basic root causes for the shortcomings among the members of the Youth Fellowship.

Neglect of Personality Development

India is known for its well-structured family system. It is, therefore, understood that to a great extent the problems of the teenagers are being attended to by the parents. Most of the decisions for the adolescents are being taken in the families. The negative side of this family centeredness is that the adolescents fail to develop their personalities, independent thinking and value clarification.

Pierre is of the opinion, "it is no longer social or parental pressure which leads to faith but personal evaluation and the choice of a specific group."⁸ In our congregations we are not giving necessary attention to the developmental period of the adolescents and to their identity formation. Even the preliminary objective of the youth ministry to take care of the identity formation in the adolescents is not carried out satisfactorily. Involvement in peer groups is a natural instinct of the teenagers. If the parents do not put them in good peer groups, they may join with bad groups. "These young people are more

⁸Babin, p. 44.

susceptible to group pressures concerning ethical decisions." ⁹ Isolation of an adolescent from the peer group also prevents the growth of his personality. Neglect of personality development, therefore, causes laxity among our young people in attending the Fellowship meetings and in making use of their talents for creative purposes. Personality development of the adolescents and young adults (20 - 35 years) is also not taken care of satisfactorily as they are not being served in separate groups. Azariah commented:

Another difficulty with our youth programmes is that they are aimed at a broad scale of age groups ranging from 15 - 35 and some times up to 40 which really represents atleast three strata of personality development among them. Further, we mingle the students, the unemployed and also the employed and often married young people all together as our target audience for our programmes.¹⁰

Lack of Understanding Between Church and Youth

It is clearly suggested that the generation gap is a basic cause that prevents the young people in our congregations from participating in the activities of the Fellowship and rendering their contributions to the church. Most often the irrelevant criticisms of the older people discourage the youth even in working within the Fellowship. It is rather difficult for the older persons in our congregations to appreciate the creativity of the youth. Charles Mowry stated:

Young adults believe they have a right to be heard, and they intend to be heard. The question for the adult society is are we big enough to sit down and hear what they have to say, even though

⁹Merton P. Strommen, Five Cries of Youth (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 42.

¹⁰M. Azariah, "The Churches and the Youth Today," National Christian Council Review, XCVI, 9 (1976), 454.

they haven't lived as long as we have?¹¹

The gap of understanding between the older people and the youth is not bridged satisfactorily. The older people do not appreciate the idea of giving more representation to the young people in the offices of the church. On the other hand, the young people are not faithful to the maximum extent in the offices that they are occupying. They do not wish to take into account the constructive advice of the senior persons. They always complain that they are not being heard properly by the senior and decision-making people of the church. In most cases they fail to see their weaknesses and neglect of value orientations. In order to have a right relationship between the senior members and the youth of our churches, the suggestion put forward by Mr. Kuhner, years back, may be taken into account. Kuhner suggested:

The Y.M.C.A. must always remember that the Church is the mother for whom it must work, but the mother must allow the grown up child to have its own way of doing the work.¹²

Lack of Understanding on Social Forces

The young people in our congregations are aware of the social issues to which they are subjected. They experience the direct and indirect impact of these issues in their daily lives. Even though they have a desire to eradicate the ills of the society, they are powerless to do so. First of all, they do not know the real social forces that

¹¹ Charles E. Mowry, The Church and the New Generation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 46-47.

¹² Basel German Evangelical Mission in South-Western India, 65th Report, 1904, (Mangalore: Basel Mission Press), pp. 49-50.

are behind the social evils. "Our extremely individualistic understanding of the Gospel did not enable us to understand the social forces that are responsible for the very suffering which we were ministering to."¹³ Secondly, they are under the leadership of incapable community leaders, who pretend to work in the society as 'good persons' but only for vested interests. Our youth depend on these persons simply for some financial and material aid. In some cases they are directly oppressed and in other cases they are unable to move against the top elite of the society. It was reported in the National Christian Council Review:

Youth are often prohibited from participation in the full development of their community and its realization of self-reliance and human dignity of all people, especially in the areas of employment, participation in structures of the societies, and the realization of quality of life.¹⁴

METHODS OF REVITALIZATION

The basic causes for shortcomings necessitate a revitalized youth ministry in our diocese. If the youth ministry is not revitalized within the immediate future, it will die within itself and young men and women will lose personality development, inner confidence and group consciousness to work as Christian youth in the society for justice and equality. As part of the process of revitalization of the youth, I mean to suggest necessary innovations in the youth ministry.

¹³"The Realities as We See Today: Reality 2," in Church and Social Justice (Bangalore: C.L.S. Press, 1975), p. 21.

¹⁴"Youth Work in the W.C.C.," National Christian Council Review, XCVI, 9 (1976), 463.

Identity Formation

The youth ministry in the diocese takes into account the ministry done for and by the teens (13 - 15 years), adolescents (16 - 19 years) and young adults (20 - 35 years). The study of identity formation for the participants of the youth ministry, therefore, calls for a diversified approach. The personality of an individual develops according to the steps predetermined in the human organism's readiness to be driven toward, to be conscious of and to interact with a widening radius of significant persons and institutions. According to Erikson there are eight processes of development on the course to adulthood. Each stage comes to its ascendance, meets its crisis and finds its lasting solution. "Crisis is used here in a developmental sense to connote not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point,"¹⁵ explains Erikson. The search for identity formation or the pilgrimage in an individual starts from infancy and reaches its climax during the time of adolescence. It is my proposal that the youth ministry in my diocese may help the adolescents to answer the existential question, 'who am I,' remembering that this answer has to do with their entire future lives.

Identity formation in an individual requires us to look into various complex matters. Efforts have to be made to bring the various selves of an individual into an ever-increasing coherence so that he may be able to say that he likes himself. Identity formation in an

¹⁵ Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 96.

adolescent requires the affirmation of the self by a loving and understanding community too. A relevant ideology that unites the building of the self towards a bright future and a new society has to be cultivated in every adolescent. Those who have failed in achieving these suffer from what Erikson calls 'identity confusion,' a confusion that tends to lead to all unhealthy existences.

In studying the developmental task of the teens, steps may be taken, to mould their character, form their individuality and develop their decisive power. "From their initiation, with puberty, into the subjective conflicts of adolescence, they have an inarticulate desire for concrete foundations and realistic goals in their lives."¹⁶ The developmental task of young adult-hood (20 - 35 years) is different from that of adolescence and adult-hood. This means that they will have to be served separately. Steps might be taken to encourage the adolescents to express their ideas freely in the presence of the young adults. Older youth, while appreciating the ideas of the adolescents, may be given opportunities to mould their leadership styles by attending a few selected committees of the diocese. Strommen remarked:

What is needed most are people who have found an identity in life and are willing to share themselves with others If the essentials in helping youth to a sense of personal significance are the human qualities of empathy, and genuineness, then untrained people, both youth and adults, can be helpful.¹⁷

¹⁶Babin, p. 21.

¹⁷Strommen, p. 31.

Having these facts in mind I propose that the youth ministry in my diocese may help the adolescents and the young adults in identity formation. Teaching of Scripture lessons, stories, songs, etc. may be directed to achieve this goal. Simulations, games, role-playing and decision-making events may also be introduced.

Small Peer Groups

The importance of peer groups in character formation, acquiring knowledge and personality development cannot be forgotten. Yet it is discouraging that character formation in peer groups may result in forming bad habits also, much depending upon the understanding and ability of the adult leadership.

The working of peer groups is not very much emphasized in my diocese. It is a natural thing for people of all ages to move with their peers. This kind of movement is already taking place in our congregations, but not in organized peer groups. So, our young people try to move with their peers without taking into consideration their behaviour, religious or cultural back-ground. This makes our young people to be involved in bad associations that eventually ruin them. The influence of politics, other religions, or atheism strengthens this involvement. Most of our young people are unemployed. So, they have enough time to be involved in these associations. In my diocese Youth Fellowships consist of students who are studying in high schools, colleges and technical institutions. They also very much like to be in groups and they are aware of the advantages of group dynamics.

It is now very obvious that the time has come to emphasize the importance of small peer groups. The different groups in Sunday Schools may be used as small peer groups. For example, discussion on Scripture lessons, simulations, games, value clarification topics can be taken up in these groups. The importance of personal sharing in small groups has to be taken into account. Youth Fellowships and Women's Fellowships in each congregation have to be divided into small peer groups. In such groups Scripture lessons and stories can be made real to the present situation by role playing. This gives opportunities to every one for participation. Simulations, games, etc. have to be introduced as far as possible in each group. Students have an important role to play in the functioning of peer groups by way of giving proper guidance to other members. Clinebell remarked:

The small sharing group is the ideal arena for deepening relationships and consequently accelerating growth. To continue growing every person requires a depth relationship with at least one other human being. The group is an interpersonal laboratory for testing and learning better ways of relating.¹⁸

I hope involvement of our adolescents in small peer groups may help them to cultivate good behaviour, along with values and love towards God and man. Small peer groups may help their members to have good relationship with their parents. It would be better to have some occasional groups including both parents and young people. Members should not feel they have a shelter in peer groups even if they are alienated from their parents. Peer groups in such controversial situa-

¹⁸Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., The People Dynamic (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 8.

tions may study the problem at length and help the members to make reasonable decisions on their relationship with parents. In short, "only in the freedom of a group search will young people be able to discover personally their church which is the Church of Christ."¹⁹

Covenant Community

Another method of revitalization of youth ministry in my diocese is to make our young people to know that they have a place of their own and that they are a community in a special sense. Youth have places of meeting in all the congregations of my diocese. Some of them are neglected, others are not well looked after and only very few are being used by the youth for their activities. In most cases the question of generation gap and church politics come in so that whatever the youth do is severely criticised by elders. Youth also intentionally do what they are not supposed to do in a religious institution. Here we must remember that Christian youth should be an example to the youth of other religious communities in our area. So, youth ministry has an important role to play in helping our youngsters to use their place of meeting properly and in its beauty. Youth should be allowed to use their centres for developing their skills, talents, and a culture of their own. This centre stands for the 'Global Village' in every congregation from which youth ministry spreads itself into the life and witness of the church and into the local community. They should go on with the evangelistic work that they are doing now and make it a point to witness

¹⁹Babin, p. 22.

Jesus Christ in their daily lives. They should be keen in maintaining a close relationship between worship and the action. "There must be a clear inter-relation between the worship and the programme of their movement; both in the weekly and monthly meetings and the seminars and training courses,"²⁰ says Leeuwen. Students who are well educated may take the initiative to develop the covenant community for cultivating coherence among the members and for creativity.

Christian youth in our congregations are to be a special community, a covenant community, in connection with our biblical tradition. The commitment of unity and 'koinonia' that they express in their joint-efforts enables them to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst. "So, then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."²¹ The working of this covenant community has to be in accordance with the existing structures and rules. A covenant community is well expressed in an 'I - Thou relationship' among its members. Our youth may be able to enter into one another's inner world and dialogue with the self. When persons in the mutual dialogue feel that God, the Eternal Thou, is also with them in dialogue, the covenant community becomes redemptive.

Move towards Liberation

The young people in my diocese are enslaved in different ways.

²⁰ Gerwin Van Leeuwen, "Worship and Modern Youth," in Relevance, Christian Youth Organisations in India Today, ed. M. A. Thomas, p. 17.

²¹ Eph. 2:19.

First of all, they are enslaved within themselves by the fear of their inferiority complex, their low positions and small income. When they look at other persons in the society who are well-to-do and power-oriented, they feel that they are worthless before them. "They have been victimized by their powerlessness, their fear and their translation of these into an internal appropriation of subservient and menial roles,"²² explained Ruether. So, they lose their self identity and depend on these persons for decision making and advice. Paulo Freire says, "Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them."²³ It is my proposal that every young person should be conscious of his or her liberation through Jesus Christ and his or her worthiness and freedom as other persons have in the sight of God. This can be achieved in small sharing groups through the study of the Scripture and personal sharing. Steps might be taken for the removal of self-hatred and self-destruction and for the resurrection of autonomy and self esteem and for discovering a new power and possibility of re-creating a community for their own sisters and brothers in suffering. Secondly, this self-unworthiness leads to group inactivity and a low level of consciousness. Once each one of our youth is liberated personally within himself or herself, they can move in a group to increase group-consciousness and stir up activity. Mutual understanding, trust and

²² Rosemary Radford Ruether, Liberation Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1972), pp. 11-12.

²³ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1970), p. 49.

mutual learning are necessary for this kind of joint liberation. Speaking of a larger social context involving more radical methods of conflict, Freire says, "The correct method lies in dialogue. The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own conscientizacao."²⁴ If the youth as a group are liberated, they can go forward in liberating the oppressed in the society through the 'problem-posing' education instead of the banking concept of education. The peculiar character of this kind of education is that it emphasizes creative problem solving instead of merely transmitting the conclusions of the past. This final step also includes the study of the social forces and structures of society in small sharing groups.

In my observations of the diocesan youth ministry, these four steps would serve as the methods of revitalization of the youth ministry. These steps might be slightly altered according to the circumstances in which the members of the youth organizations are involved. In the revitalization process the students in the Youth Fellowships should recognise their responsibility in carrying out these four steps. The revitalization of the youth ministry should be the basis for directing the youth to attain higher objectives.

²⁴Ibid., p. 54.

Chapter 3

INNOVATION WITHIN THE CHURCHES OF THE DIOCESE

BY THE YOUTH FOR ADEQUATE SOCIAL WITNESS

In the second chapter we have evaluated the existing youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala. We have then emphasized the necessity for its revitalization. We have also discussed the ways and means by which the youth in this diocese should be revitalized. In the next chapter we will see the necessity for social change. Later we will examine the role of the youth in this diocese in their capacity as social change agents. The latter should take place only after the youth have come ahead in their continuing process of revitalization. In this chapter, I am concerned with innovations within the churches of the Diocese of North Kerala for adequate social witness. I think the life and work of our parishes depends upon the sincere participation and genuine creativity of the youth. As the would-be social change agents the first thing the youth must do is to innovate their parishes and make them their centres of social change. This brings me to narrate the existing social witness in our churches of the diocese and draw a careful evaluation. This is followed by my proposal for innovation within the churches by young people. Linthicum has an optimistic view on the youth when he says:

The young adult of today, no matter what his political position, is basically a visionary, and he will respond to that church which is visionary. But he is also a pragmatist, and will commit himself only to that church which is concretely affecting the future of its

community through its vision.¹

SOCIAL WITNESS IN THE CHURCHES OF THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of North Kerala is characterized by its stereotyped patterns of social service and unrelatedness to society. This is justified on the basis that the diocese is only beginning to be partially self supporting financially. The diocese is utilizing almost all its income for its administration and only very little is being spent for social witness. Even today we are depending on foreign funds to run our socially oriented institutions such as the orphanages and homes for the aged, the destitute and unwed mothers. General social and political issues are dealt with by the various political parties and their doctrines. Whenever a religious institution deals with such issues, it is afraid that it is identifying itself more with a secular objective than with the spiritual and is thereby creating confusion among the people. The diocese thinks it is better to keep aloof from most of these complicated issues. This laxity influences the pastors also not to deliver sermons that directly involve the social life of the congregations. This unrelatedness to social issues is also seen in the work of the Sunday Schools, Youth Fellowships and Women's Fellowships.

The Role of the Church in Society

It is a very relevant question: What should be the role of the church in society in the midst of complex political issues in Kerala

¹Robert C. Linthicum, Christian Revolution for Church Renewal (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 30.

State and the larger world? We would answer the question in our understanding of the divine commission of the church as Kraemer suggested:

To proclaim the biblical message of Christ's Lordship over all men and over the whole world in all its realms of life. At the present time, when the fundamental problems of the individual, of the family, and of social, political, and cultural life have to be restated, this commission includes the inescapable necessity of developing a truly Christian social ethic.²

Definition of social witness. Social witness of the church may be defined as the continuous process of identifying itself with the poor and the oppressed within the society and being a vigilant spokesman for them. Social witness of the church aims, at first, immediate social relief and, secondly, for a lasting social change in the structure of society. Social witness of the church also includes the appreciation of the good policies of the Government and the support of the top elites for the common good and at the same time proclaiming very clearly the various ways in which their bad policies are affecting the oppression of the poor. According to Linthicum, "to concentrate on working for social change without working for the transformation of individuals is heretical, but to concentrate one's efforts on winning individuals to Jesus Christ while allowing the world to go to hell is also heretical."³ Social witness of the church, therefore, is double faced in working for the transformation of individuals and at the same time involving in the whole life of the community - politics, economics, education, social problems, cultural development - everything. This pre-supposes

²Hendrik Kraemer, The Bible and Social Ethics (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 2.

³Linthicum, p. 31.

relevant innovations within the church in developing new methods for handling social issues.

Relationship between the church and society. The definition of social witness calls us to state the relationship between the church and society. The primary issue to deal with is: How does the church take its stand in society? The church is aware of the fact that as a community it stands with all other sections in the society under the judgement and mercy of God. Kraemer remarked:

It knows equally its obligation for identification and solidarity with the world and the world's needs and its obligation to keep distant from and to protest against the world and its tendency to become demonized.⁴

The relationship between the church and society, therefore, might be a creative involvement of the church in society. The church might carry on its divine commission to serve the world for the sake of Christ, who is the Lord of the Church and the King of the World.

Gardner stated:

The church is able to remain in the world and maintain its identity over against the world only if it constantly points to a more ultimate relationship in which both the church and the world stand before God. The task of the church, therefore, is to witness not to itself but Christ and to the One to whom Christ bore witness.⁵

The relationship between the church and society may be summed up as a pattern of creative tension with respect to the complex political issues dealt with by the State. The church, on the one hand, should be

⁴Kraemer, p. 26.

⁵E. Clinton Gardner, The Church as a Prophetic Community (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 190.

relevant to the needs, values and goals of men in culture and, on the other hand, it should summon men to repentance and renewal.

Existing Forms of Social Witness in the Churches

I would like to draw attention to the existing forms of social witness in my diocese and then to evaluate them in the light of the above definition. I would also like to comment on the participation of young people in the social witness of my diocese. There are about 35000 baptized members including children in my diocese. All of them are directly or indirectly affected by the life and work of various societies.

Divine worship and other religious activities. Divine worship and other religious activities in our churches follow the stereotyped pattern. In view of the older generation we like to keep the traditional methods of worship. Sometimes the ministers include matters connected with the social life of the congregation in the intercessory prayers during the divine service. Only very seldom do they speak on social issues and give the congregation an over-all view of the issues. I do not recollect any occasion when I took a firm stand on critical social and political issues. Only on very few occasions I have advised the congregation through my sermons to choose between the right and the wrong after explaining to them the relevant social issues in which they were involved. Whenever my congregation is involved in evangelism, the focus is on the spiritual aspect of human life. The youth in our congregations like to deal with the current social and political issues, but we do not do it because they are not well organized and trained to

handle them. So, what happens in our congregations is as Glock says, "the laity remain apparently unshaken by years of sermonizing because rarely does the sermon touch on controversial, moral and ethical issues."⁶

Charitable institutions. Even though there is no charitable institution on the parish level, the diocese is running a few of them. On the diocesan level we have eight homes for boys and girls, two creche programmes, one home for the aged, one home for unwed mothers and one home for ex-lepers. We have a few schools, technical institutions, one college and one industrial school. Recently the diocese is running a hospital and a dispensary. The diocese has a 'Home Mission Field' where we concentrate on the educational and health facilities of the Hill Tribes. The diocese is also supporting the Church of South India in running a foreign mission in Thailand among the lepers. We remember all these charitable institutions in our Divine services and the members of our congregations contribute to their support. But, the diocese is mostly dependent on foreign gifts to run most of these institutions. The young people in my diocese take special interest in supporting some of these institutions partially and according to their capacity.

Participation in social issues. In the face of crises and natural calamities, local and national, the members in my diocese have supported those suffering people morally and financially. As individuals we are aware of the corruption, injustice, and inequality to

⁶ Charles Y. Glock, (ed.) Religion in Sociological Perspective (Belmont, C.A: Wadsworth, 1973), p. 163.

which almost all persons in our society are subjected. Yet, as a Christian community in the society we do only very little to eradicate these evils. Our participation in social issues is limited to giving immediate relief to those persons who are in need. The following statement is true of almost all congregations in my diocese: "Whenever there were natural calamities, the church was there to help. The church moved by genuine concern, went to help the suffering and the needy wherever they were."⁷ I have noticed that the young people in our diocese took more initiative in helping the suffering persons with immediate relief.

Evaluation

It is now appropriate to evaluate the existing forms of social witness in the churches of my diocese in the light of the above definition. Social witness in my diocese has to take into account various other factors in the church and society.

Strengths of the existing social witness in the diocese. It is a matter of great appreciation that the diocese is maintaining the old institutions of charity and is running a few new ones. The members in the diocese are trained to give more generously towards the maintenance of these institutions. These institutions are catering to the needs of the poor and deserving children and older people. Our institutions

⁷"The Realities as We See Today: Reality 2," in Church and Social Justice (Bangalore: C.L.S. Press, 1975), p. 20.

have a great influence in society. They have set an example for other socially oriented institutions. The life and work of these institutions and their way of administration serve as the best examples for others to follow. In short, the diocese is still in the process of continuing its social witness in a limited way.

Limitations and failures. The negative aspect of our existing social witness is that it is limited to certain institutionalized forms. The weakness is that the diocese is not willing to do more creative social witness. We are satisfied with what little we are doing. Even the people in the parishes are self centred. As members of the congregations, they feel that they are responsible only for their own spiritual lives and for making others aware that they are sinners in these narrower ways. At the same time, they forget the fact that they themselves are sinners in exploiting the poor and the underprivileged, and in creating an unbalanced society. In most cases our people are not aware of the social forces that are behind the social and political issues. Only very few educated persons have sufficient knowledge of the social sciences in order to analyse the society. We like to minister to the poor and the needy but do not want to know the basic causes of their suffering and need. That means our people do not dare to raise their voice against all the social forces that are existing within the society and giving birth to all social ills. We must cut at the very root of the social evils in order to have a lasting cure.

An awareness for other forms of social witness. Limitations and failures in the present social witness of the diocese have called the members of the diocese to look for other forms of social witness.

Social service organizations and other denominations have already set examples for us to come out of our narrow space of service. A majority of our members and youth have felt the necessity for other forms of social witness. What I have learned through my questionnaire is that the diocesan authorities and the leaders of the Youth Fellowships are aware of the urgent necessity for adequate social witness. The church authorities have felt the need for the study of problems such as housing for the poor, land reforms, evils of drinking, and dowry, ... They are also beginning to learn that social witness should not be limited to running charitable institutions. This realization might encourage a continuing process where our people would analyse the existing social ills and encourage the common people to eradicate them.

INNOVATION WITHIN THE CHURCHES BY YOUNG PEOPLE

We have already discussed the ways and means by which the youth in my diocese should be revitalized. We have also analysed the existing social witness in the churches of the diocese. We have evaluated the inadequacy of the social witness in our churches. In the next chapter I shall deal with the existing social problems generally in India and particularly in Kerala State. In the light of these it will be very clear that a planned social change will be essential. The preliminary step for the youth in our diocese to work as social change agents should be their revitalization by way of introducing innovations in the youth ministry. The next step the youth must take is to innovate their respective parishes and make them centres of social change. It is quite clear that the life and work of our parishes depend upon

the sincere participation and genuine creativity of the youth. The youth are looking for a church that is being renewed for creatively moulding the future of the society.

Necessity for Innovation

Natural evolution or unintentional change is taking place in every sphere of human life and the society in which we are living. The church should feel the pulse of the ever changing society. It should be willing to earnestly look into the constantly changing ideologies and life-styles of society with a critical evaluation. Madan stated:

The individual, the family, the local community, the nation and the world of nations are involved in varying degree in the process of social change, which renders the old truths uncertain and the new truths transitory.⁸

Planned or intentional social change is very seldom taking place even though it is necessary to eradicate the ills and inequalities in society. The planned changes that are taking place within society due to scientific, technical, tele-communicational and space-technological developments are not always directed for relevant structural changes in society. The church, being the greatest voluntary organization of believers, has an important role to play in the society to channel natural evolution for constructive purposes and to foster adequate planned social change. Madan points to the fact that "in this dynamic society, people are obliged to face new situations which

⁸Gurumukh Ram Madan, Social Disorganization (Indian Social Problems, 1) (Calcutta: Allied, 1969), p. 11.

necessitate new forms of response, new patterns of behaviour and new ways of thought."⁹ Kraemer remarked:

Our concern is that the church, because of the nature of its message, and because of its commission and divinely-ordained task, should not only judge, criticize and interpret, but that it should feel itself obliged to do its specific part in changing the world.¹⁰

As we have already seen, our churches are satisfied with the stereotyped social witness. These types of social witness are not adequate to attain the proposed objectives. If the church is called to foster adequate social change, there should be innovation within it. Only an innovated church can work with the youth to attain planned social change. Narrating the politics in Kerala, E.V. Mathew stressed the responsibility of the Christian Church as follows:

A new Christian view of law and politics as well as other lay functioning has to emerge and the churches have a great responsibility to foster and develop a theology of law and a Christian critique of political action. The Christian Church itself requires structural changes to enable it to perform new roles and functions it is called upon to perform.¹¹

Innovation within our congregations is necessary because we must understand that where the church and world meet is our common humanity. Many theologians like Paul Tillich, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Bishop John A.T. Robinson and Harvey Cox have attempted to translate the gospel into secular or non-religious language. Gardner, who emphasized the renewal of the church through engagement with culture, said:

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Kraemer, p. 34.

¹¹E. V. Mathew, "Christian Commitment to Democracy and Kerala Politics," in Church, Society and State in Kerala (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), p. 54.

Before meaning-ful dialogue about God can take place, the church must, first of all, identify itself with secular man at the points of his aspirations and potentialities as well as his limitations and experience of guilt, alienation, and meaninglessness.¹²

It is the responsibility of the youth to take the initiative to begin the process of innovation within their respective parishes even though they are not the only innovators.

Methods and Goals of Innovation

It is my proposal that innovation might take place in each congregation of the diocese separately. There might be some device to correlate these innovations and concentrate on the outcome on the diocesan level. It should be understood, at the very outset, that innovation within each parish depends upon mutual understanding between the youth and other members of the congregation. The generation gap is still existing. The older persons do not appreciate the modern outlook of the young people and the youth do not like the traditional and stereotyped methods of the older. Pierre Babin pointed out:

Ultimately what really matters is that young people accept their desire for belonging as their only chance of growing to a fulfilment of understanding and love. From the Christian perspective, refusal to participate in the Christian community cuts off one's chance of being open to the humanity and divinity revealed in Jesus Christ.¹³

Mutual understanding, caring and respect should be cultivated between these two groups. This will enable them to work jointly for making innovations in congregations. First of all, a general body

¹²Gardner, p. 221.

¹³Babin, p. 66.

meeting of the parish should be called and a committee should be formed giving one-third of the seats to the youth. Persons from every strata of the congregation, including forward-looking adults and students, may be represented in the committee. This committee might be called 'Parish Innovation Committee.' It is the objective of the general body to discuss the major issues, failures, weaknesses and successes in social witness within the church and the ways in which innovations can be made. The Youth Christian Council of Action, Kerala, that came into existence in August 1938 has generally drawn up the method of revival as follows:

In order to change prevailing attitudes, disposition and habits which are not in conformity with the mind and spirit of Christ, the Council shall go into the various evils within and without the Churches and try to organise public opinion to combat them.¹⁴

It is then the responsibility of the Committee to meet frequently and to go deeply into the subject.

Secondly, it is necessary to put the goals and means of approach very clearly and to specify the period of the project. To begin with, the goals set out for innovations within the church may be limited to certain specific fields such as education, health facilities, studying existing social injustice and inequality to which the congregation members are subjected, the pro and con of land reforms, etc., alongwith the enrichment of the spiritual life of the congregation. The goals might also include the education of the congregation to a democratic order of society, providing opportunities for the fullest development of the

¹⁴George M. John, Youth Christian Council of Action, 1938-1954 (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1972), p. 5.

personality of every member of the parish and promoting relevant changes in the general administration of the church in the direction of greater justice to the common people. It would also be better to keep the list of immediate goals short enough that something can really be done about all of those adopted. This involves deciding what the highest priorities are. Prior to this an understanding of the theology on the mission of the church is essential. Linthicum advised us in this matter:

. . . that small group of people who have been gathering to determine mission and set strategy cannot do this apart from some solid theological reflection on the mission and work of the church!¹⁵

It is necessary that the pastor should speak on these issues on different occasions and give the congregation a clear idea as to what the committee and the innovators are going to do. The goals might also include the innovation within the respective organizations or associations in the parishes both in the parish and diocesan levels.

Thirdly, a committee should be formed in the Youth Fellowship with all the youth members of the above mentioned Innovation Committee and selected members including adults in the Youth Fellowship. It is the responsibility of this committee to assist the first Committee in all possible ways, as creating innovation within the parish is the initiative of the youth. For example, its members, individually or in small groups must collect all the available data and statistics pertaining to the different aspects of the social issues within the parish,

¹⁵Linthicum, p. 159.

study them and present them before the committees for necessary action. Students must make use of their capacities and talents to enrich the work of the committee. Lastly each committee should evaluate the process of the innovation from time to time. This will help them to see their progress and weakness and improve their methods. The senior members in the congregation should feel that the youth have a genuine interest in implementing the programmes and that it is their responsibility to support them in all possible ways to make the innovations possible. The youth also should make it clear now and then that even though they work as the agents of innovation, they can do it only in a spirit of mutual responsibility, with youth working hard at it, but hoping that adults can and will do the same. As there are forward-looking adults in the local Youth Fellowships, they should be joined with the youth in evaluating data and supporting proposals to the church.

As I have already mentioned innovation might take place in all the parishes of the diocese. A committee might also be constituted on the diocesan level with the representatives from each Parish Innovation Committee, Diocesan Youth and Children's Board, and adults to co-relate the innovations. Innovation, therefore, will be a process in the diocesan level.

In the process of innovations within the church, conflict should be anticipated and must be dealt with creatively. Sociologists are of the following opinion: "While the conflict appears to be over the immediate issue, in larger terms it is over change and the anticipated

consequences of change."¹⁶ "Since we cling to existing habits and customs, we oppose those who press for change."¹⁷ But the youth should have an optimistic view on conflict and that something new will come out if it is dealt with creatively. I would like to join with Bonhoeffer in saying that we are living among complex issues and among a host of enemies. It is our responsibility to carry on our commission here itself. There are different ways of dealing with conflicts, and one among them is the democratic method of handling issues. Mutual respect and appreciation of differences of opinion will help the youth to minimize conflicts. Creative handling of conflicts will help the youth to be mature and emotionally healthy individuals so that in their next responsibility as social change agents they will be more successful.

Innovated Churches as Centres of Social Change

In a multi-religious society, the church has an important role to play. People from other religions will look at the church as a whole for creative responses on social issues from time to time. The youth are only a part of the church, though ofcourse an integral part. So, my suggestion is that the parish should be the centre from where the initiative for planned social change must come out. In other words, the youth should make use of the church, that is already in the process of

¹⁶Lyle E. Schaller, The Change Agent (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 161.

¹⁷Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Personal Growth and Social Change (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 165.

innovation, to be the centre of social change. John stated:

Even as the faith and confession of the churches formed the basis of the aims and activities of the Youth Christian Council of Action, the education of the churches and the Christian community of Kerala in the implications of the faith for society and for social action by the churches was an essential part of the Council's objectives and programme. In fact, the Council was very much church-centred in both these senses.¹⁸

The process of change starts within the church and spreads to the society through the agency of the youth. Linthicum stressed the capability of the church as centre of social change as follows:

The people become intentional. They feel a sense of control over their own destinies, and the destiny of their church. They become optimistic and visionary, recognizing that they can change history. And they begin to face the future with the intention of shaping it. And when that happens, the pastor no longer has a church that is a nice, friendly institution. He has a movement on his hands that is out to change the world.¹⁹

¹⁸John, p. 44.

¹⁹Linthicum, p. 157.

Chapter 4

URGENCY FOR RELEVANT AND PLANNED SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOCIETIES

The youth as social change agents should ask the question: Is there any urgency for relevant and planned social change in our societies? A critical analysis of the social, economic, educational and political issues in our societies will answer this question. It is the responsibility of the youth and the concerned committees to study carefully the complex social, economic, political, and educational vices and their consequences and assess the depth of the urgency for planned social change. In order to assess the magnitude of urgency, I will classify the present issues in our societies under the following heads. An understanding of the ongoing social change is also essential for the assessment of the urgency for relevant and planned social change.

"Change is taking place at rapid pace both in the material and non-material aspects and society is becoming an unstable equilibrium of conflicting forces."¹ The major institutions like the family, the temple, mosque or church, the school, the state and the economic institutions are so rigid that they are unable to react to these changes and they make the task of social equilibrium a difficult one. Madan also stated:

When the present forces of social change are so violent that the existing social institutions and other means of social control are

¹Gurumukh Ram Madan, Social Disorganization (Indian Social Problems, 1) (Calcutta: Allied, 1969), p. 12.

unable to control the new situation there arises social disorganization.²

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

In our societies, social problems of various kinds call for our attention. These problems, in most cases, are inter-related. Their consequences have far reaching effects. Madan stated:

When social problems arise to the extent that the smooth functioning of the society is threatened, social disorganization is in existence. . . . It is often the case that one disorganized person affects others, thus giving rise to a social problem; and one social problem leading to another, ultimately bringing social disorganization.³

Individual Offences

Individual disorganization is closely related to social disorganization as a disorganized individual produces social disorganization and vice versa. Individual offences include crimes of various kinds, immorality, adolescent rebellion and juvenile delinquency. "The white-collar crime may be defined approximately as a crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation."⁴ Most of our Youth Fellowship members have agreed upon these individual offences. Causes of individual disorganization may be summed up as biological factors, environmental factors, amusements of

²Ibid., p. 17.

³Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁴Ibid., p. 84.

low moral tone, commercialised recreations, unemployment, loss of security and crisis in life. For many persons there is confusion of values and the rewards for unethical behaviour offer them many temptations. Truants, problem children, vagrants and neglected children in addition to delinquents deserve our kind attention. Madan was correct when he said:

These children generally come out of poor or disorganized families or broken homes which could not provide them basic needs, i.e., nutrition, clothes, companionship, education, recreation, and affection which are essential for the child's personality.⁵

Social Vices

Alcoholism, use of drugs, smoking, gambling, prostitution, adultery, beggary, etc. are considered to be the major social vices by the Youth Fellowships. According to Madan "alcoholism and drug addiction are harmful not only for the individual but also for his family and the society at large."⁶ Likewise all other social vices have wider social effects. The causes behind these social vices are complex and inter-related. Some of them are bad housing, lack of recreational facilities, inherent nervous defects, sudden success or failure in business, urbanization, bad companionship and fun, miserable condition of the socio-economic environments, etc. A gambler "is an idle person depending upon chance and hates work, a parasite living on the earnings of others."⁷ Industrialization, rapid urbanization, lack of family and social control, lack of moral teachings, frequent contacts between

⁵Ibid., p. 94. ⁶Ibid., p. 153. ⁷Ibid., p. 185.

men and women during employment, over crowding, commercialized recreation including cinemas, dancing, drinking, and late marriages are considered to be the causes for social vices. Males support prostitution due to sexual urge whereas females resort to it due to economic dependency and absolute poverty. Economic, social, biological, and religious causes account for beggary. Madan remarked on beggary:

It is a form of a personal disorganization as it indicates the failure of the individual to adjust himself with his social milieu. It is a symptom of social disorganization as the beggar in the street at once reminds us of the ill-organized society which is not able to adjust him properly.⁸

In general these are the major social vices that have spread throughout our societies.

Consequences

The youth who are villing to be social change agents should go deep into the consequences of individual offences and social vices. In most cases the consequences are far-reaching and inter-related. The first major consequence can be termed as 'social disorganization.'¹

Madan summarized:

Looking to some of the symptoms such as rapidly growing population, poor standard of living, food deficit, malnutrition and under-nutrition, large scale unemployment, beggary, illiteracy, prostitution, crime, corruption, too many political groups, strikes by students and labourers, we can say that the society is in a state of social disorganization.⁹

⁸Ibid., p. 226.

⁹Ibid., p. 30.

The second major consequence, as we have already seen, is 'individual disorganization.' For example the symptoms of a chronic alcoholic are "degradation of moral sense, diminishing of intellectual faculties, fading of will, alcoholic psychoses."¹⁰ A third consequence may be traced as 'family disorganization.' Venereal diseases, friction in families, etc. also culminate in family disorganization. According to Madan "the cultural conflict between the older and young generation may result in disorganization of the adolescents, sex delinquency and some times resulting in family disorganization."¹¹ In short, these are some of the major consequences of social vices and individual offences.

ECONOMIC ISSUES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Kerala is a land of economic problems where most people depend on agriculture. Alexander stated:

There are thus too many people on too little land, there is too little by way of produce to feed so many mouths. There is almost chronic food shortage and food stuffs have to be purchased from elsewhere. Thus in the agricultural sphere alone two problems exist - a farm problem as well as a food problem.¹²

Unemployment, underemployment, and unemployment among the educated are the common economic problems in our societies. This is intensified by irrational feudal land-tenure system whereby the tenants

¹⁰B. N. Ahuja, Spot Essays (New Delhi: Varma Brothers, 1976), p. 204.

¹¹Madan, p. 20.

¹²P. J. Alexander, "Towards Understanding the Kerala Background," in Church, Society and State in Kerala (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), p. 15.

have no security. Population explosion and health problems are inter-related and are alleviated by economic factors too. Lack of adequate recreational facilities and the ignorance to utilise the leisure time properly are the corresponding economic issues. Thus, economic issues may be summarized under the following heads.

Poverty and Unemployment

According to Madan "poverty and unemployment are the two major social problems causing sickness, personal, family and community disorganization."¹³ Even though the causes of poverty and unemployment may be slightly different, the effects of both of them are almost identical. Comparing with relatively rich persons, an individual may be poor; but his absolute poverty is determined on the basis of his capacity to maintain a minimum decent standard of living. The Indian Press announced in 1974:

The Minister of State for Planning, Mr. Mohan Dharja, admitted in the Rajya Sabha today that two-thirds of the Indian population was living below the poverty line. In a written answer, the Minister said the monthly per capita private consumption of Rs.20 at 1960-61 prices was regarded as the minimum desirable level of consumption. People with less than this level of consumption were regarded as poor.¹⁴

Is poverty increasing day by day? It is difficult to give a concrete answer as scholars like Dandekar, Rath, Minhas, Ojha, Bardhan do

¹³Madan, p. 251.

¹⁴Press Trust of India (New Delhi), August 1, 1974, cited by Duarte Barreto, The Indian Situation, India's Search for Development and Social Justice (Analysis of Indian Society, No. 2) (Bangalore: St. Paul Press Training School, 1976), p. 9.

not agree as to whether it is increasing or decreasing. But Kurien stated: "Two decades of planned economic development have led to the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer."¹⁵ Not only that the number of the poor is increasing but their standard of living is also deteriorating. Some of the complex causes of poverty and dependency may be classified under personal, political, economic, biological, technological, and social factors. It is absolutely necessary for the Christian youth in my diocese to go deep into these factors. Poverty is characterized by hunger and malnutrition, non-availability of safe drinking water, sanitation facilities and cheap clothing, and acute shortage of housing. The poverty of our people is intensified by extremely low health standards and the vulnerability of a great majority of our population for diseases. Our literacy figure is much too low. The elitist character of our educational system is very well expressed in the importance it gives to higher education at the expense of the primary. Struggle against illiteracy means to wipe out inequalities, oppression and poverty in our country and to pay more attention to adult education. These factors of poverty lead to disorganization. As Madan stated: "Under these conditions we cannot have healthy individuals, educated children, socialized men and women interested in the progressive development of our social organization."¹⁶

¹⁵C. T. Kurien, Poverty and Development (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1974), p. 14.

¹⁶Madan, p. 257.

Even though unemployment is one of the crucial problems in India, all experts agree on the unreliability of statistics in this field. According to the available data the growth of unemployment is from 3.3 million in 1951 to 14 million in 1974. It is calculated that about 50 percent of the unemployed in urban areas are educated persons. There are various types of unemployment namely casual, and seasonal, frictional, and technological, temporary, voluntary, cyclic, involuntary, underemployment, and unemployment arising from shortage of capital, equipment or other complementary resources. Personal factors in conjunction with technological and economic factors are considered to be the main causes of unemployment. The evil effects of unemployment include personal disorganization, as well as family and community disorganization. One of the major short-comings in our five-year plans is that in a labour-abundant economy like that of India, employment is not prioritized according to its urgency. It should be one of our major concerns to find various opportunities for employment to eradicate the evil effects of unemployment from society.

Population Explosion

Population explosion is another crucial factor that may be classified as an economic issue. Ahuja remarked:

The problem is indeed gigantic in dimension and intricate in its manifestations, impinging on the social, economic and psychological structure of the nation and the individual at the same time.¹⁷

¹⁷Ahuja, p. 149.

The magnitude of the issue of population explosion may be traced as follows. Between 1901 and 1921 the population in India increased by 0.27% annually. Barreto recently stated:

The 1951-61 decade was marked by a 21.6% increase, while the 1961-71 saw a still bigger rise of 24.8%. According to the latest statistics, the present population of India is around 604 million and increases by about 11 million a year, almost a million a month! . . . At the present rate, our population will exceed 1 billion before 2000.¹⁸

This supports the fact that there are more people in India than the land and its present productive capacity can uphold. The causes of population explosion may be summed up as environmental, climatic, physical, economic and socio-religious. "Poverty is usually also associated with lack of education, the absence of prudential considerations and a consequent attitude of irresponsibility in relation to marriage and procreation."¹⁹ Due to the heavy density of population in Kerala, the population problem has become a very acute one.

Health and Recreational Problems

Proper health is an essential factor for the smooth functioning of an organized society. "Health does not mean merely the absence of disease but complete adjustment of the individual to external environments, physical and social."²⁰ Not only medical but social, economic and

¹⁸Barreto, p. 8.

¹⁹Madan, p. 284.

²⁰Ibid., p. 286.

educational factors are also related to proper health. Causes of low health might be summarized to include lack of proper medical care, curative and preventive, lack of an hygienic environment, lack of safe water supply and sanitation, lack of adequate diet and nutrition, lack of general and health education, and lack of proper housing. Illness in rural areas is due to ignorance of simple hygienic laws and indifference to their application. Frequent confinements of women ruin their health and contribute to improper care and upbringing of children. The insitiutional growth of our health system is rather remarkable since independence. But our health standards are very low and a lion's share of our population is susceptible to all kinds of diseases. The mortality rate is rather high, 15.1 per thousand, and life expectancy at birth is low especially among the poor. The following question is very relevant: "How can the illclad, the homeless, those who live without safe drinking water and proper sanitation, avoid diseases?"²¹ The very orientation of our health system does not prove to be effective for maintaining proper health facilities in rural areas. It is an alarming fact that 50-60% of our rural population remain without basic medical facilities. "The general standards of life of our people and the over all organization of our health system, therefore, explain, to a great extent, the miserable health standards of our people."²²

²¹Barreto, p. 24.

²²Ibid., p. 25.

Leisure and recreation are rather corresponding factors for the physical and mental growth of human beings. Leisure may be defined as an opportunity to engage in some kind of activity that is not required by daily necessity. Recreation includes any activity pursued during leisure, either individual or collective, that is free and pleasurable, having its own immediate appeal.²³ Recreation that results in physical, mental, emotional, moral, social, and civic benefits to persons is considered to be an essential factor for the development of well-balanced personalities and social welfare. What really happens in our societies is that almost all people do not act according to the principles of leisure and recreation. As most of our villagers are fully engaged in striving very hard for their daily bread, they think they do not have sufficient leisure. Whenever they get any free time they do not know how to make use of it to benefit themselves and society. Commercial amusements such as cinema, sports, dance, circus, or plays are rather passive forms of entertainment for spectators. Those who are working in urban and semi-urban areas have more leisure time and commercial recreation has become their recreation field. More active recreation such as group games, art forms, hobbies, welfare activities, painting, tailoring, and handi-craft have not yet developed satisfactorily in our urban and rural societies. We have not yet appreciated folk songs, stories, poetry, dance, drama, and games that are seen in some villages as symbols of our culture, and we have not yet evaluated their effects

²³ Madan, p. 320.

upon the development of our personalities and society in general. Lack of religious interests in many people gives a larger place for commercial recreation. In short, "the chief cause of leisure time disorganization is lack of adequate recreational facilities,"²⁴ though there also is a lack of wholesome individual interests.

Consequences

The youth in our diocese who are preparing themselves to be social change agents should go deep into the economic issues and their consequences. These consequences may be similar to those mentioned in connection with social problems. The evil effects of poverty and unemployment may be summarized as personal disorganization, low health, family disorganization, community disorganization, rural indebtedness, and dependency. When the trained youth in our societies do not get employment they become disillusioned and cynical. The problem of unemployment results in physical, mental and spiritual strain, induces a liking for idleness and self-indulgence, and weakens self-respect and the sense of responsibility. Madan remarked:

It is also true that where people are so deeply sunk in poverty it is impossible to take adequate care of the children in the shape of feeding, nursing and medical assistance, even if they were educated and familiar with the laws of hygiene and sanitation.²⁵

"The overwhelming action of hunger," according to Josue de Castro, "dulls all of man's other vital interests and desires, even

²⁴Ibid., p. 337.

²⁵Ibid., p. 285.

suppresses them completely."²⁶ The population explosion results in hunger, poverty, social and economic issues, illiteracy, even as these also contribute to the population explosion. We have learned that family planning methods alone cannot solve this crucial problem. As we study the face of poverty we can see that population, population growth rate, literacy, urbanization, GNP, imports and exports, and life expectancy at birth are interrelated. Health problems result in frequent effects of diseases, short span of life, decreasing life expectancy at birth, personal and community disorganization. Lack of varieties of participatory recreational activities results in the emergence of commercial amusements, social vices, idleness among young people, population explosion and family disorganization. These consequences resulting from economic issues will have to be dealt with substantially by the youth to have lasting social changes.

OTHER PROBLEMS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

There are some more problems in addition to the above in our societies for assessing the urgency for relevant and planned social change. I have classified educational issues, political corruption, injustice and inequality especially in land ownership under this head.

Educational Issues

Education is one of the major fields that calls for our immediate

²⁶ Josue de Castro, "Geography of Hunger," (London: Collancz, 1952), pp. 33-69, cited by Barreto, p. 49.

and faithful attention. The statistics from the educational field presents the shocking fact that about 70% of the Indian population are illiterate. In addition to the literacy figure of Kerala being rather high, the total number of illiterates is not coming down satisfactorily. We have drop outs in lower classes due to various local factors. "The high cost of education especially at the university level prevents many intelligent students from proceeding to higher studies."²⁷ Adult literacy might be given primary importance and it should be the basis for many of our programmes that are essential for the all-round development of the affairs of the State. Adult education should be the next important thing that requires our due consideration. The International Conference on Adult Education stated:

There is, therefore, a more urgent need for educational provision to help the adult population recognise the nature of problems, the possibilities, and the difficulties inherent in rapid social and technological change, the choices available, and the extent to which adults can, through education and knowledge, make wise choices and decisions. This educational assistance is only possible through adult education.²⁸

Steps must be taken to eradicate illiteracy completely. But this is rather a slow process in our societies. The importance of adult education to equip the common people in facing current problems is not taken care of seriously. We often forget the fact that education is "a life-long process of seeking and learning, of questioning and

²⁷Madan, p. 300.

²⁸Helen Keuffer and S. C. Dutta (eds.) Report of the International Conference on Adult Education, July 28-30, 1961, p. 4, cited by Madan, pp. 304-305.

mastering, of selecting and rejecting, of doing and changing."²⁹

The next important thing is that we are faced with inequalities in education as in other fields. We may ask the question: Who are the actual benefactors of education in our societies? Children who are coming from rich families usually get the maximum benefit out of our educational system which is meant for all. We have some drop outs and 75% of them come from the bottom 40% of our population. Coming to the issue of financial outlay for education it is very clear that little importance was given to literacy in our Five Year Plans till 1969 and that the elitist character of our educational system was given top priority. Poverty, inequalities and oppression in our societies lead to more drop outs. Another draw back in our educational system is the banking concept of education. Paulo Freire has remarked on the existing educational system as follows: "The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them."³⁰

Political Corruption

As we have already seen in the first chapter, the political field is very much corrupted. Every one wants to be involved in political parties. This involvement is not for the betterment of other people

²⁹Kurien, p. 182.

³⁰Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1970), p. 60.

in society but for one's own vested interests. Even though each party upholds many high principles, the advocates of these parties are very far behind in implementing them for the welfare of the common people. The controlling factor in most of the political parties is to win the largest amount of support in exchange for certain appointments or for settling major criminal cases. This principle promotes inefficient workers whose sole qualification is their political zeal and activity.

Mathew defined democracy:

Democracy is a civilization of the dialogue where everybody talks with everybody else about everything and where everybody is content to abide by the decision of the majority as long as the dialogue can continue.³¹

With this definition in mind, the democratic state in India that at first functioned for political and civic equality later sought also for social and economic equality. It became what might be called a democratic welfare state. This broadening of the function of the State also created new opportunities for corruption. "The new form of democratic government at various levels such as village, town, city, state, and central and the expansion of government activities have led to the various forms of corruption."³² Some of the reasons for corruption are existence of large areas of political bodies, close connection between politics and big business men, false interpretation of democracy, change in values, and lack of adequate machinery to deal with various kinds of

³¹E. V. Mathew, "Christian Commitment to Democracy and Kerala Politics," in Church, Society and State in Kerala (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), p. 50.

³²Madan, p. 339.

corruption. Madan strongly remarked:

Certain politicians, racketeers, high officials, big business men, bankers and legislators now profit by using the local governments (municipal corporations, State governments or Central Government) for their own ends, while the ordinary members of the community often receiving only a minimum of government services.³³

In short, the State is functioning on impersonal lines where officials and political leaders take undue advantage from community funds.

Injustice and Inequality

Wherever democracy is misinterpreted in India it appears in the form of injustice and inequality. Since independence injustice and inequality are spreading through almost all fields. Our societies are not an exception to this general rule. We have already seen inequalities and injustices in getting employment and in providing medical aid, health facilities and education. These vices are more acute in the availability of food grains, clothing, land, and housing facilities to the poor. These inequalities and injustices may be summarized as unequal standards of life, unequal incomes and unequal possessions. Even in our societies about two-thirds of the population are leading a miserable standard of life. But, in the midst of poverty and scarcity some sections in our societies live in abundance. Before the declaration of Emergency in India, artificial scarcity of food grains and other commodities was in existence and certain sections in our societies were

³³Ibid., pp. 341-342.

profiting from this scarcity. The consumption expenditure of the people reveals the glaring disparity in the standards of life. The widening gap existing between the rich and the poor is very evident from the fact that in 1967-68 the private consumption expenditure of the bottom 5% people was Rs.78/- at 1960-61 prices, whereas it was Rs.1330/- for the top 5% of the population. This continued to be the pattern for 1973-74.³⁴ This inequality is obvious in the pattern of consumption too. Disparities in incomes among our people are to a certain extent greater. Even if we assume that the lowest 20% in our societies equally share their incomes, we might conclude that the rich top 5% get 7 to 10 times more income than the poor bottom 5%. According to 1970 prices, 40-50% of our population has only Rs.40/- a month to spend.³⁵ Inequalities in land ownership, housing, clothing, etc. prove the magnitude of the unequal possessions. "14.4% of the house-holds owning agricultural holdings cultivate 63.6% of the area, whereas 70.7% of the house-holds control only 16.8% of the area cultivated."³⁶ In the rural areas the top 20% enjoy 96% of the land whereas the bottom 80% have to be satisfied with 4%. The strong emphasis on the 20-point programme by the former Prime Minister and the Government had slightly improved the programme of land re-distribution. Barreto summed up the developments:

³⁴Barreto, p. 36.

³⁵"The Realities as We See Today: Reality 1," in Church and Social Justice (Bangalore: C. L. S. Press, 1975), p. 12.

³⁶Ibid., p. 11.

Only 6.5% lakh acres have been declared surplus so far, an improvement of less than 4.5 lakh acres over the April 1975 figure. This is just a fraction of the estimated surplus of 40 lakh acres. Of the 6.5 lakh acres declared surplus, only 3.23 lakh acres have been taken possession of by the State governments and 1.36 lakh acres have been distributed among the landless.³⁷

Inequalities in housing point to the fact that a few have palatial bungalows with modern facilities whereas many people huddle like rats in city tenements or live in small huts with a single room in rural areas. Yet for many "the roof over their heads is not made in these perishable, man made material, but it is the celestial sky itself, decorated by stars in the night."³⁸ In many of our congregations a few people were provided with a small compound and a house by the Missionary Societies. Some people had sold the land and the house when they had run into debts. For others the land and the building have come directly under their control because of the recent land reforms. Inequalities in clothing are also increasing day-by-day. The textile mills are producing sophisticated synthetic fibre for the urban people who are very few in number. On the other hand, they are not producing sufficient cotton cloth that is simple and cheap for the poor people.

Consequences

Educational issues, political corruption, injustice and inequality in every field result in severe consequences in our societies. These issues, as we have already seen, affect the society in one way or

³⁷Barreto, p. 41.

³⁸"The Realities as We See Today: ... ," p. 14.

the other. Education, in effect, is designed to serve the rich and the middle class people. As it is not mainly vocational oriented, students are forced to discontinue their education. Even those who graduate do not find suitable job and idle away their precious time. Later they engage themselves in revolutionary parties like the 'Nexalites,' and cause social disorganization. As adequate steps have not been taken to prevent the drop outs even in lower standards, children who are coming from poor families remain at home and become a burden to the parents. The banking concept of education makes the young people rather lazy and passive, recipient of certain outdated values and theories, and kills their inborn talents to study. Consequences from political corruption are rather high in Kerala. As most people in our societies are literate, they are in the know of current political issues. Each person wants to be politically power oriented. Common people depend on this small group of leaders for employment, settlement of certain criminal cases, personal or family matters, for vested interests, etc. These people very often influence the government officers and corrupt the administration. Almost every field is corrupted by these petty political leaders. "The corruption is a product of the modern materialistic outlook of the society where financial values are upper most and those who have pecuniary success are praised by society."³⁹ Madan also argued: "It is the corrupt politicians and officials who make other crimes possible."⁴⁰ In our societies we are prone to injustice and

³⁹Madan, p. 343.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 348.

inequality in every field. Common people are very much disturbed by these social vices. They are the ones who become victims of these ills, and they too, for survival and for accomplishing their needs, resort to the evil ways. The magnitude of injustice and inequality proves to the fact that there exists two distinct sections of the population in our societies. On the one hand we have the top 7-10% who are affluent due to their ownership of resources and income. They are powerful, educated and politically oriented to manipulate the existing system to fulfil their selfish motives. On the other hand we have the remaining, "but among them the bottom 50% must be specially identified because of the dire, inhuman poverty of their situation caused by their exploitation by society."⁴¹ The Synod of the Church of South India observed:

It would, therefore, seem that progressively Indian society is drifting away from its ideals of equality of opportunity, brotherhood and justice for all, and that definite trends towards 'elitism' can be traced in our present system. In fact, our social system - the way our society is organized and run - becomes more and more an instrument in the hands of those who use economic and political power to promote the selfish interests of their own group, depriving and neglecting the under-privileged masses.⁴²

EVALUATION

Now we strongly feel that there is the greatest urgency for social change. It must be relevant and planned in order to wipe away all the ills in social, economic, ~~educational~~ and political fields. At the same time these planned changes should not collapse the social ~~equilibri-~~um that is necessary for the progress of each society. "If the changes

⁴¹"The Realities as We See Today: ...," p. 17. ⁴²Ibid.

are such that the society remains intact and is moving towards the goal set by the society, there is said to be social organization in society.⁴³ The youth as social agents should assess the importance of the existing situation for planned social change. During the period of a perceived crisis, the pace of change can be speeded up tremendously. The youth who have very carefully analysed the existing problems in society, should adopt suitable methods for affecting changes. In my opinion, the social change we anticipate might not be "for social reform within the existing social structure, but for a social revolution to bring about a just social order through basic structural change."⁴⁴

We have already studied the existing forms of social witness in our churches and necessity for innovation. It would be better if we could evaluate also the present role played by the church in facing these existing realities. The youth should ask: What is the understanding of the church concerning the Gospel? Are we fulfilling our calling "to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord?"⁴⁵ The hospitals, orphanages, educational institutions, etc. that are designed to provide enlightenment, health and solace to the needy-ones, have rather turned out to be centres of patronage and vested interests. The alarming fact is that our best schools are serving the top elite of our society, the hospitals are

⁴³Madan, p. 11.

⁴⁴"Sociology, Economics and Politics in the Service of India's War on Poverty," Religion and Society, XXII, 3 (September 1975), 67.

⁴⁵Luke 4: 18-19.

nursing the few in whose hands economic, political and social power is vested, and most of our charitable programmes are not reaching to the poorest of the poor. "Unwittingly, we have been serving the oppressors, while we thought we proclaimed a Gospel that was meant for the poor and the oppressed!"⁴⁶ Very often our pastors speak on individual offences in terms of individual sin and salvation but they do not emphasize the social causes of these offences. Most of our pastors believe that all these offences and issues are mundane in contrast to the joys of the world to come, and besides they argue that social ills would take care of themselves if enough men were brought to Christ. In short, the church is far behind in creatively handling the existing social evils and inequalities. The youth as social change agents should see on the one hand the magnitude of the existing social ills and on the other hand the laxity on the part of the church in creatively dealing with these ills. Individual, family and even social organization are almost collapsed. A critical evaluation of the social scene and of the role played by the church has thus pointed to the necessity for an urgent, relevant and planned social change.

⁴⁶"The Realities as We See Today: ... ," p. 21.

Chapter 5

DIRECTING THE YOUTH MINISTRY FOR RELEVANT AND PLANNED SOCIAL CHANGE

It is satisfactorily proved that the Christian youth in my diocese can be revitalized. They are creative enough and they can be regenerated to meet the challenges of the present century. We have already discussed the methods of revitalization. It is also possible to bridge the gap of understanding between the older people and the youth in our churches. We have hypothetically studied the possibilities of innovating the churches for adequate social witness by the youth. It is imperative that the innovated churches might be the centres for the youth for executing social change. We have already assessed the urgency for relevant and planned social change in view of the existing social, economic, educational, and political ills, inequalities and injustices in society. How can we affect relevant and planned social change in our societies? Who would act as appropriate social change agents? In the light of the fact that the diocesan youth ministry is in the process of revitalization, is it possible in directing it for relevant and planned social change? The purpose of my investigation, therefore, is to study atlength the ways in which the youth ministry in my diocese may be directed for relevant and planned social change. What would be the proposed goals of social change? Will the youth ministry succeed in fulfilling the goals of social change?

YOUTH AS SOCIAL CHANGE AGENTS

It is very well understood that young people are energetic, creative enough and visionary so that their talents might be used for many constructive purposes. For example, it was directed in the Youth Congress Leadership Camp in Kerala, to ask "Youth Congress workers to put up an uncompromising fight against social exploitation."¹ It was also observed that young political workers "should divert a major part of their energy to constructive works which would help the weaker sections of society, taking into account their responsibilities in the changed political situation."² The political leaders, especially the ruling political leaders, are aware of the potentialities of the young generation. They want to make use of the talents of the youth for building up the nation. During the period of the recent Emergency the young people of India were very much filled with enthusiasm to do many things under the leadership of Mr. Sanjay Gandhi. Some of them proved to be creative. But many of their programmes culminated in utter failure. Their over-enthusiasm, vested interests and the contempt of the advice of the senior persons had completely ruined their future. It even led to the over throw of a Ministry. Even though they had good ideals, they failed a lot in implementing them. Union Deputy Minister for Planning, Dr. Shankar Ghosh called upon Youth Congressmen in 1976

¹The Hindu (Coimbatore) (November 1, 1976), 12, col. 2.

²Ibid.

"to take a vow to ensure economic stability to the vast majority of common people through a concerted and well planned programme."³ But, the youth who were politically power-oriented had overlooked these ideals and went on with their vested interests. This should be a lesson for our Christian young people not to overlook the ideals and at the same time to abandon their selfish motives. A hypothetical study of the methods of affecting relevant and planned social change might look into these facts also. Our Christian youth are called to be social change agents. If so, in what ways can they work as social agents? Will these methods suffice to meet the need? As social change agents the ministry of the youth will be very noble and far reaching, even though it might be difficult. They should take into consideration the cultural, traditional and religious background of the people within the society. They must use very carefully, in analysing the society, the knowledge they have already gained through the study of the social forces and structures. Ivan Illich stated:

Social change always implies a change of social structure, a change of formalized values and finally a change of social character. These three factors constrain invention and creativity, and action against these constraints becomes a responsibility of those who experience them as shackles.⁴

They should also remember the following characteristic of innovation. Schaller remarked:

The innovator will devote his efforts to developing a new

³The Indian Express (Cochin) (November 1, 1976), 3, col. 3.

⁴Ivan D. Illich, Celebration of Awareness (New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 101.

method of responding to the needs of the poor, the oppressed, and the victims of social disaster. His emphasis is on adding to the resources of society, rather than on destroying or reforming old programmes and methods.⁵

Organizing Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations

The Christian youth are an integral part of the society. They are greatly influenced by the non-Christian youth. It is obvious that any Christian individual or organization that is in the move for any change in society should seek the help, and advice of non-Christian youth and senior persons. The success of any relevant change in a society depends upon the mutual understanding and co-operation within the members of different religions and cultures. The youth in my diocese want to be social change agents in order to bring forth relevant and planned social change. In a multi-socio-cultural and religious society it would be ambiguous for them alone to work as social change agents. So, it is my proposal that they should volunteer to form 'Inter-Socio-Cultural Association' in every community coming under the geographical area of every parish in the Diocese of North Kerala. It should be noted that people from every walk of life will be equally represented in the Association. A reasonable number of members from the two committees of the parish, 'Parish Innovation Committee' and the special committee in the Youth Fellowship, should represent the church and the youth in the Association. In order to affect social change in the diocesan level, the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations should be inter-related by an

⁵Lyle E. Schaller, The Change Agent (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 55.

association in the diocesan level by name 'Inter-Socio-Cultural Association in North Kerala.' This will help the youth as social change agents to co-ordinate their activities. The youth will make use of these local Associations and the central Association to implement the methods of social change. So, the end results will be relevant and reaching into different strata of the society crossing the barriers of culture and religion. It is the responsibility of these Associations to meet frequently and work for relevant and planned social change.

It should be clearly noted that organizing Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations in local and central levels will be a great task for the youth in my diocese. They should have an overview about the persons in their concerned communities. Then only it will be possible for them to select suitable persons from different strata of life to form these Associations. It would be better if these members are really interested in social welfare. In selecting members for local Associations from the two existing committees in churches and Youth Fellowships and from the public the method should be democratic way of election. Inter-Socio-Cultural Association in North Kerala might be composed of selected representatives from each Inter-Socio-Cultural Association, and the committee for innovation on the diocesan level and selected persons from different walks of life. It will be the responsibility of this central Association to co-ordinate the activities of the local Associations and give them advice and suggestions for better working from time to time. It would be better for these Associations to have sub-committees according to the different goals for which they are working. For example, the Youth Christian Council of Action had

committees such as 'Current Affairs Committee,' 'Vigilance Committee,' 'Relief Committee,' 'Beggar Relief Committee,' etc.⁶ It should be very clearly noted that the youth should not think that they are the only persons who are working for social change. All the members in these Associations are fully responsible for affecting relevant and planned social change. But, at the same time our youth should not forget the fact that they have taken the initiative for all these activities and they should play their role to their maximum capacity. The sincere participation of the Christian youth in these Associations will enable them to implant Christian principles in the working of these Associations for social change. Even though the purpose of my investigation is to make use of the youth ministry in my diocese for social change, it would be better, in a multi-religious society, for our youth to work through these well-organized Associations.

Utilizing Available Resources

Resources of various nature are essential for the better understanding of the problems and for ascertaining goals and methods of approach on a particular subject. Similarly, materials from all available sources have to be taken into account by the social change agents. These resources will enable them to analyse the existing social ills, the goals to be set forth and the methods to be adopted for social change.

⁶George M. John, Youth Christian Council of Action. 1938-1954 (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1972), pp. 11-12.

change. The Inter-Socio-Cultural Association in every community itself is the first resource that can be utilized as it represents persons from all strata of the society. Their sharing of personal experiences will be the first means of approaching the issues in their true nature. In addition, there are many other resources that are available for this Association to make use of for a better understanding of current social issues. Statistics on poverty, unemployment, per capita income, health facilities, etc. can be collected from the local and district offices of the Government and other agencies. Data can be obtained concerning the existing facilities for education both in the lower and higher classes. Certain data would be essential to study the weaknesses of the present educational system and to find out the reasons for drop-outs especially in lower classes. The Association can also collect materials on the present position of the labourers and farmers in relation to the inheritance of land. They should collect all the available materials on the structure of the society, social forces and the upper, middle and lower classes of people in the society. They may also collect materials on the creative participation of religions and political parties in the life of the society. These materials and data will serve as secondary resources that can be utilized properly in analysing the current social issues.

It is very clear that a framework for the analysis of every society is essential for our social change agents to proceed with their investigation. The Synod of the Church of South India stated:

Society is a very complex reality, and we cannot rely upon our spontaneous impressions and insights only. We need a method, a theory, a tool of analysis, in order to be able to find out the basic

aspects and root causes of social problems.⁷

Fr. Francois Houtart s.j., General Secretary, FERES (International Federation of Institutes for Socio-Religious Research, Louvain, Belgium) distinguished three fields in society, namely the Economic Field, the Political Field, and the Religious Field. He sub-divided the Political Field into the Social Order, the Political Organizations, and Ideology.⁸ While assessing the urgency for relevant social change, we have already put forward a frame work for the analysis of society under the heads, social problems, economic issues, educational issues, political corruption, injustice and inequality. The Inter-Socio-Cultural Association in every community and in the diocesan level can adopt either of these methods as a framework for collecting materials. These Associations might form sub-committees for quickening the process of collecting available materials. It is the responsibility of these sub-committees to collect all available materials with utmost sincerity and classify them into simple and more comprehensible pieces.

Mutual Learning on Social Issues

Mutual learning on social issues among the members of our Associations may be the next step to take place after collecting the available materials. This is a reasonable way of utilizing the resources for a careful analysis of society and its issues. Mutual learning will

⁷"The Realities as We See Today: Reality 1," in Church and Social Justice (Bangalore: C. L. S. Press, 1975), p. 25.

⁸Ibid.

enable the illiterate and the oppressed to feel freedom and personal worthiness to express themselves and to study the materials in depth. For example, they appreciate what the Government is doing in land reforms and join with it in implementing them. They are now able to study the effects of the reforms very carefully and put forward some more relevant suggestions. This critical evaluation of each issue of the society becomes an after-effect of the mutual learning. All of the members will feel how far these problems are really their own problems. This will help them to overcome the 'culture of silence' of which they are partaking. Another after-effect of critical mutual learning is creative handling of conflict that may arise in the Association and the society. "It is simple honesty as well as good human relations to be appreciative as well as critical."⁹

After regaining their freedom and personal worthiness, these members of the Associations can go forward in sharing their experience with other persons in their areas and cultivate mutual learning. This process of mutual learning can be a continuing process within the Association and outside. It was stated:

Conscientization may be accelerated or sometimes even initiated, only through the participation of the people in collective action. In such circumstances, it is imperative that social scientists should have participatory involvement in the mobilization process.¹⁰

Paulo Freire calls this method "problem-posing education."

⁹Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Personal Growth and Social Change (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 180.

¹⁰"Sociology, Economics and Politics in the Service of India's War on Poverty," Religion and Society, XXII, 3 (September 1975), 68.

Freire stated:

Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. Men teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are 'owned' by the teacher.¹¹

The participants of the mutual learning may make use of the resources already collected and their personal experiences. They can make a study on the present social issues and evils created by the members of their own society. They can evaluate how far their silence has made them to become worse. Now, they are no longer in fear of the oppressors, and their study and work are not by compulsion. They jointly study and work for their own betterment and for the society in which they live. It would be more appropriate if direct interaction with smaller groups of students, youth, tribals, agricultural labourers, etc. were established. As social change agents the members of these Associations may direct mutual learning in the light of the following motto:

The social scientist therefore must be concerned with the development of a high sense of social technology which will enable him both to initiate and to participate more effectively in the development ethos ie. 'he must be able to stimulate and create desires, he should be able to engender a spirit of willingness, a hope for the future, a concern for the welfare of his fellowmen and a missionary zeal to do something about it. In order to be able to create such a spirit he must himself have it first.'¹²

Prioritising the Fields of Action

As social change agents, the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations have to deal with a vast area of social, economic and political issues.

¹¹Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1970), p. 67.

¹²John S. Augustine, "Social Scientists in the War against Poverty," Religion and Society, XXII, 3 (September 1975), 23.

We have already seen that all available data and materials have to be collected concerning each society in the light of the prescribed method. A careful tabulation of the data should follow this for a deeper study of the society and its issues. So, the question is: Is it possible for the social change agents to deal with all issues in the society simultaneously? If not, what should be our criteria for giving preference in handling issues? It is my proposal that a detailed study of the tabulated data together with personal observation is essential before determining the goals and means of approach. A careful study of the data will reveal the seriousness of each issue. This will help the social change agents to list the issues according to their importance. Another way of determining on the priority of issues is to assess the percentage of the persons within a society who are really affected by each issue. The members in these Associations are representing different strata of the society and as such their personal experiences and observations will be a criteria for giving preference in handling issues. After assessing the relative importance of issues, it would be better to put forward the goals for social change. Goals should be given preference according to the importance of the issues in society that the social change agents have dealt with. We shall deal with the goals in detail in the latter part of this chapter.

The next important task of the social change agents is to draw an outline in detail as to their fields of social change. In the light of the issues in the society that are important and grievous, the social change agents have to decide on the fields of action. For example, they can choose economic issues as the topmost issues to be dealt with.

They can give due importance to other issues and classify them in a descending order. So, each problem will have its place in their list of important and crucial problems. This should be followed by stating the various ways and means by which the first issue can be dealt with. This issue has to be divided into smaller issues, and ways and means of handling these sub-issues have to be stated clearly. For example, economic issues may be sub-divided into poverty, unemployment, population explosion, health and recreational problems, etc. Then the field of action may be designed to solve these issues. Discussion within the members of the Associations on the field of action that would solve these issues is very essential. The social change agents should bear in mind the following principle while engaging themselves in the fields of action.

It is stated:

The Social Scientist is equipped with the ability of scientific analysis of social systems which enables him to analyse and interpret the structure of exploitation. He has a leading role in communicating deliberately and consciously his basic findings to the people, to make them aware of their situation. There are various ways of doing this, eg. his research priorities could be from the perspective of the oppressed; his lectures could critically analyse society and its workings etc., and point to desirable changes for securing greater social justice.¹³

It would be better to concentrate on a particular field of action for a certain period of time. It should be remembered that no single group can possibly work on all the issues that I am going to suggest in the next section to achieve a particular goal. It would be more effective to select and deal with two or three issues that would lead to the goal. In most cases they would be able to deal with a

¹³"Sociology, Economics and Politics ... ," 67-68.

couple of issues one time as some of the issues are inter-related. Sub-committees must be constituted to work on inter-related issues simultaneously. Prioritizing the fields of action, and then concentrating on two or three issues corresponding to the fields of action would enable the social change agents to achieve the proposed goals one after another. If it would be possible to have a number of groups to deal with all issues simultaneously in achieving a goal, that would be a more effective action.

PROPOSED GOALS AND METHODS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

As social change agents the Christian youth in my diocese will be working along with persons from every strata of life for relevant and planned social change. Their important task will be to put forward the goals of social change. How would they accomplish this task? On what grounds they would decide on the goals? What I would like to suggest is that they might take into account the following factors before deciding on the goals. As we have already seen the Inter-Socio-Cultural Association in every community and in the diocesan level must have a careful analysis of social, economic and political ills in society. They must tabulate them and put them in order according to the urgency of each issue. Prioritising the fields of action might follow this. For a better decision on the goals it would be appropriate to study what methods other socially-oriented units have adopted for deciding on the goals. Goals must be very relevant and suitable to the urgent needs of the society. In the light of the above facts I would like to propose certain goals for social change and classify them in the following order.

Most of the Youth Fellowships in my diocese have also joined with me in arriving at the following goals. While studying on the goals I shall state the methods by which the goals might be fulfilled.

Resolving Social, Economic and Political Ills of Society

We have already studied the social, economic and political illls in our societies. These issues are complex and are threatening the equilibrium of our societies. So, in the light of these issues our goals should be focused on these issues and steps might be taken to eradicate them. The following recommendations where approved by the Synod of the Church of South India in 1974:

In our country the struggle for the establishment of a just society has assumed a great significance and urgency. This necessitates a radical restructuring of the existing socio-economic order. The Church cannot and need not be the main agent for such a transformation. In fact, in our situation, the Church can play only a humble role. However, it has the obligation to work with all forces committed to the creation of a just society and to translate its concern for justice into concrete action in its own sphere. The Church's commitment to Christ, the Lord of justice, demands its identification with the nation in its fight for a just order, and more especially with the oppressed and the victims of injustice. At present the most pressing problems, namely, mass poverty, glaring social and economic in-equalities and widespread illiteracy call for immediate remedial action.¹⁴

We have divided social problems into individual offences and social vices. Under the individual offences we have juvenile delinquency, adolescent rebellion, immorality, crimes of various nature, etc. As we have already seen social vices include alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, prostitution, smoking, beggary, etc. The social change

¹⁴"The Church's Response to these Realities," in Church and Social Justice (Bangalore: C. L. S. Press, 1975), p. 33.

agents, therefore, might very well state the goals for eradicating all these social problems and redeeming the society from the consequences of these problems. In implementing these goals, steps might be taken to find out the root causes of these problems and solve them. Goals might include extending assistance to the parents or guardians in locating difficult children in danger of maladjustment, recognizing early symptoms of unhappiness, conflict and insecurity. The Associations for social change must educate such families for better family living, social hygiene and counselling, establish wholesome recreational agencies for all, serve under-privileged children, improve housing facilities, schooling and income level of poor families and reduce economic insecurity. Goals should be directed for making people aware of the ill effects of alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, etc. Steps should be taken to educate people through seminars and classes on the economic and social benefits of prohibition. Madan remarked:

Thus, prohibition brought about a marked change in the standard of living of the poor working classes. It was observed that the industrial labour on account of prohibition was able to retain twenty to thirty percent of the wage bill previously spent on drink.¹⁵

So, it is made very clear that creation of a growing public opinion in favour of prohibition is very essential. Persons who are subjected to gambling and smoking can only be helped through deterrent punishment, religious teachings or friendly advice. Adultery and prostitution are the creation of society and certain socio-economic causes are at the root of them. The social change agents should find out ways

¹⁵Gurumukh Ram Madan, Social Disorganization (Indian Social Problems, 1) (Calcutta: Allied, 1969), p. 167.

of providing the poverty stricken female with either rescue homes, reception centres or protective homes. Meanwhile sex education should be given to all people as far as possible. "There is need for educating the public mind on the gravity of the consequences of the evils of prostitution both to the individuals and to society as a whole."¹⁶ The root causes of beggary that is common in our societies such as unemployment or under-employment, break down of families, community disorganization, sickness, old age, religious mendicancy and indiscriminate almsgiving should be found out and steps might be taken to solve them. In solving the problem of beggary, Madan stated:

They are not to be treated by the society as social pests and out castes but with all sympathy and tolerance they need as an integral part of the society, only grown abnormal through force of circumstances and deserving of all care and help.¹⁷

Madan also suggested, "If training and work are provided for the able-bodied and institutional care or outdoor relief is given to handicapped persons the problem can be solved satisfactorily."¹⁸ The social change agents might make use of the 'Beggar Relief Committee' to work on these lines to solve the problem of beggary.

The next important field for social change may be summarized under the head: 'economic issues.' As we have already seen one of the crucial economic issues is the problem of poverty and unemployment. The social change agents should at length study the diverse and complex factors leading to poverty and unemployment in our societies. It is also necessary to study carefully the evil effects of unemployment and poverty. So, the goals should be focused in cutting at the very root

¹⁶Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 247.

of the causes of these issues and thereby alleviating the consequences of these problems. The social change agents might work for the removal of personal disabilities. Steps might be taken to provide health services to all deserving people either free of cost or at a nominal rate. They must volunteer to run small clinics or join either with government or the socially-oriented organizations for providing health services in all possible ways. Vocational education and job-oriented education have to be given preference in our educational system in order to make students aware of different skills and able to select one for their better future. "There is no life without a good living and educators must recognize the importance of preparation for a life work as part of the educational process."¹⁹ The social change agents might also try to provide work for the physically handicapped and the unemployed youth. Economic development to remove poverty and unemployment is very essential. They might co-operate with the Government in starting major and minor irrigation works, land reclamation schemes, rural industries and old handicrafts, mixed farming, public work programmes in slack agricultural seasons, etc. in rural areas. In the urban sector steps might be taken to expand large scale industries, start new ones, save the existing small scale industries and encourage the starting of similar new industries. The Study Group during the Second Five Year Plan has recommended:

. . . for the setting up of orientation camps which would help remove the disinclination on the part of the educated to undertake manual work. Such camps would assist in discovering the vocational

¹⁹Ibid., p. 269.

aptitude of the youth and if a liaison was established with a prospective buyer it would be possible for the latter to pick up educated people from the camp for suitable employment.²⁰

Steps might be taken to keep the educated leadership in rural areas by running small scale industries at rural centres on a co-operative basis. Population explosion is the next important issue that impinges on the social, economic and psychological structure of the nation and individuals simultaneously. It is imperative that the social change agents should visit houses and try to educate the people on the merits of family planning and encourage them to follow atleast one method for the smooth running of their families and society. It would be better to arrange seminars on family planning, listen carefully to reactions towards family planning and convince persons of the economic, social and hygienic benefits and urgency of family planning. Then the social change agents might proceed to conduct family planning camps with attractive financial aid to the persons who would be undergoing operations for family planning. Ahuja defined population education as follows:

. . . education aimed at providing an awareness of the population problems in the broad perspective of building a social order of equality and economic justice leading to a welfare State through the process of internationalization of positive attitude and emphasising the belief that man can control and determine the course of action, of himself, of his family and of his country.²¹

We have already seen that in dealing with the health problems in our societies, one should deal not only with the medical factors but

²⁰Ibid., p. 277.

²¹B. N. Ahuja, Spot Essays (New Delhi: Varma Brothers, 1976), p. 151.

also with the social, economic and educational factors. The social change agents might select the most deserving spot in the society, conduct an up-to-date survey and render all possible aid to improve the hygienic, educational, moral, and occupational standard of the people. For example, the members of the St. George Orthodox Cathedral, Calicut, has selected a fishermen's colony at Puthiyappa in Calicut, conducted a detailed study about the families, and they are helping them to raise their standard of living including hygiene under the 'Family Friend Project.' For better handling of health problems, the social change agents might work on the following objectives of the primary health units:

The functions of the primary health units are to provide personal health services, particularly for mother and children, school health, control of communicable diseases, water supply, sanitary improvements, family planning and health education to the public.²²

While trying to encourage other voluntary organizations and women's organizations to teach the public in conserving the nutritious elements in food and avoiding wrong use and wastage, the change agents should try to raise the morale of officials in preventing food adulteration. The social change agents might plan and organize the leisure resources for the masses in which every person might get opportunities to spend his leisure in individual activities. They should arrange for recreation, for the active participation of the common people, in order to cultivate physical, mental, emotional, moral, social, and civic benefits. Proper guidance might be given for women to utilize their leisure time creatively in gardening, knitting, tailoring, drawing, painting,

²²Madan, p. 287.

etc. The change agents might volunteer to start community centres with libraries, radios, reading rooms, games, cultural activities, and organize community development programmes giving special attention to adult education and religious studies. To start with, they can make use of the meeting places of the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Youth Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, and other religious, social or cultural associations as recreation centres for some people.

Many factors have already demonstrated that a thorough change is essential in the educational field. One of the objectives of the social change agents should be to renew the entire educational system to suit the modern trends in psychology, counselling, technology, science, mathematics, etc. In most cases education should be vocation-oriented and certain change agents might work as 'Vocation Guidance Officers' to direct children to choose the right vocation. In order to eradicate adult illiteracy, steps might be taken to conduct night classes for the adults, as literacy becomes a powerful weapon for social change. In the struggle against illiteracy the social change agents must work for concrete policies to wipe out poverty, inequalities and oppression in our society that might reduce the high percentage of drop outs.

Problem-posing education will be the most suitable method for the adults to study jointly the subjects that they face in their day-to-day life such as land ownership, co-operative farming, family planning, eradication of poverty and unemployment, fight against food adulteration, artificial scarcity of food or injustice and inequality. Every person may be encouraged to read at least one or two papers daily, published under the auspicious of different political parties and conduct

faithful criticism on the current topics. The role of the change agents is to create together with those who feel themselves oppressed the conditions under which true knowledge is possible. "Three stages may be distinguished in this process: mere awareness, critical reflection and the urge to transforming action."²³ The political field is rather a complicated one and the issues therein are complex, as every one pretends to be a politician and interprets political principles from the standpoint of his or his party's vested interests. The social change agents must convince students, teachers, officers, industrial workers and people in other fields of life to root out the bad influence of politics from their place of work. They can do this through seminars, adult education classes, conferences, or work shops. The change agents must make it clear that students, teachers, workers, officers, doctors, and other citizens should not dance to the tune of the corrupted politicians.

"Social change involves political power and, therefore, the prophetic contribution of the church must be in relation to politics."²⁴ While discussing suggestions for major paths to political power for all citizens, Seifert stated, "such suggestions can be made under four headings, including public-opinion formation, persuasion of officials, political club participation, and campaign activities."²⁵ The social change agents might have some more goals to attend to according to the urgency of such issues. But, I would like to propose the following goal also

²³Joseph Vattamattam, "The Story of Exploitation of an Adivasi Community in Kerala," Religion and Society, XXII, 3 (September 1975), 54.

²⁴"The Church's Response ...," p. 35.

²⁵Harvey Seifert, Power Where the Action Is (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 114.

for the social change agents to deal with. As every walk of life is decorated with injustice and inequality, the goal should be to eradicate these evils completely. This will be possible only through the method of conscientization where every person will be conscious of the injustice and inequality to which he is subjected. What the oppressed need to do is to work for the removal of self-hatred and self-destruction and the resurrection of autonomy and self-esteem, discovery of a new power and the possibility of recreating a community with their own brothers and sisters in suffering.²⁶

Focusing on Social Relief

Social change should have goals directly dealing with social relief. Social relief is very essential in the daily life of the society and in times of distress, calamities and epidemic. A detailed study of the data concerning each society will definitely show that certain sections of society require immediate social relief. It can also be made clear in what fields immediate social relief is essential. It is a fact that social relief is carried on by socially oriented organizations, youth organizations, women's organizations, a few churches in our diocese and other denominations, Lion's Clubs, Rotary Clubs, T.O.C.H., etc. But such a relief should not be limited only to times of flood, drought, other natural calamities, epidemic, accident, etc. Social relief might be extended to the down-trodden and the oppressed section of every society in the fields of health, education, sanitary facilities,

²⁶Rosemary Radford Ruether, Liberation Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1972), p. 12.

clothing, housing, job opportunities, etc. But the church and the socially-oriented organizations are not conscious of these daily routine issues. Now the time has come for the social change agents to think about this seriously and to plan some schemes for affecting social relief on these lines. They can follow the principles of the following Project of the All India Catholic University Federation in Calicut. In their Project, 'The Beach Blossoms Story,' they have selected the most neglected Vellayil Kadapurem (beach in Vellayil) and are still working among the fishermen with the undermentioned objectives:

- 1) adult literacy programme, 2) self-employment programme, 3) health and hygiene programme and 4) small saving scheme.²⁷

The special features of the Project are:

- 1) to be a model for the whole country, 2) to participate students, educators, service clubs, poor people, etc., 3) to be scientific, experimental and research oriented, 4) to serve a comparatively neglected area, 5) using 'conscientization' methodology and 6) understanding 'development' to include: economic growth, social justice, self-reliance, growing respect for human values and building forces and structures for growth.²⁸

There are people in the bottom level of society who need every support, encouragement and loving concern. The social change agents with the support of the social clubs will be able to raise their standard of education, adult literacy, health, hygiene and sanitation, self-employment, small savings, etc. Social relief may be extended on the following lines also. It would be better to provide the drop outs with adequate facilities to continue their education. The change agents may volunteer to provide people with wells in those areas where they are

²⁷"The Beach Blossoms Story: April 1975 - 1976 August," p. 4.

²⁸Ibid.

facing acute water-shortage. They may go house to house in areas where primary medical aid is not yet reached and give free medical assistance. They may work to give healing and new life to those who are suffering from tuberculosis or cancer. Steps might be taken to make the delivery of women in rural areas scientific and easy in order to prevent infant mortality. The Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations separately or in collaboration with the local social clubs might run seminars and camps on family planning methods. It would be better to encourage common people to keep their surroundings neat and tidy and discourage them from making the environments polluted. The change agents might provide girls who are illiterate and have no other way for livelihood with such skill as tailoring, midwifery, mat-weaving, spinning, cane making. In doing all these social relief activities, temporary and lasting, the social change agents might try to co-operate the general public in these activities and win their confidence and support. 'The Christian Welfare Centre' sponsored under the auspicious of the Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malappuram has set an example for these service programmes.²⁹ In some areas the social change agents can make use of relief agencies for implementing relief programmes. 'The North Kerala Christian Service Association' sponsored by the Diocese of North Kerala is designed to nurse the sick and the suffering and to help the oppressed and the poor. It is a Christian association that having non-Christians also as members, is constituted for the main purpose of giving relief to the sick and the invalid. But now-a-days the working of the

²⁹ Malavala Manorama (Calicut) (January 14, 1977), 7, col. 4.

Association is not at all satisfactory. So, my proposal is that the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations in the concerned societies may try to find out the ways and means of revitalizing the work of the North Kerala Christian Service Association in order to fulfil the objective of nursing the sick and the invalid and assist the Association on the lines of revitalization.

The Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations are also expected to work to enrich the cultural aspects of various groups in each society. Each society is a collection of different religions and cultures. It is to be noted that there is a resurgence of all religions, regional cultures and languages after the independence. "In India religions are closely linked with cultural traditions. Therefore in one sense the recognition of many religions means also the recognition of diverse strands of culture."³⁰ Indian culture is a combination of diverse cultures sponsored by various religious sects such as Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, etc. It is still varied according to the existence of different linguistic and regional groups. So, in a country like India, "clear recognition of cultural diversity in the country and the guarantee of cultural freedom are, no doubt, essential for national unity."³¹ The social change agents, therefore, might try to encourage each culture to grow within itself. New trends in modern culture have to be adopted to enrich the cultural aspects of various groups. At the

³⁰P. D. Devanandan and M. M. Thomas, in Christian Participation in Nation-Building (Bangalore: The National Christian Council of India and The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), p. 46.

³¹Ibid.

same time the social change agents may try to encourage people to re-create ancient cultures and give new dimensions to them. Various cultural activities have to be so designed that each person, man or woman, may get opportunities to develop his or her talents. This will help persons to make use of their leisure time creatively. By encouraging people to engage in various cultural activities, the social change agents will be able to provide them with recreational facilities. So also the enrichment of cultural aspects of various groups will result in the development of well balanced personalities and social welfare. To put it in simple words, the social change agents might work to enrich the cultural aspects of various groups and thereby provide opportunities for persons to develop their talents.

Another thing the social change agents might do is to develop a synthesis of the several cultural elements. This will help each culture to assimilate what is good in other cultures and contribute many things for the progress of other cultures. The Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations will also be working in multi-religious societies. Most of the cultures are closely related to the religions. Religions, religious believes and customs, therefore, are an integral part of our people. It would be better for the social change agents to find out the golden truths in every religion and enlighten people in the light of these truths. This will enable them to call people to fight against injustice and oppression and to go forward in brotherly love. People may be taught to appreciate also certain specific truths in every religion and to carry on social service programmes on the basis of these truths. "Every theology has an anthropological content inherent in it or derivable from it;

and every anthropology is based on theological presuppositions either explicitly or implicitly."³² This holds true as Thomas stated:

One of the important contributions of the leaders of Anti-Brahminism has been the development of a strategy of education to awaken the semi-literate and illiterate masses of non-Brahmins and to bring them to self-respect and self-reliance in their struggle for social emancipation.³³

This principle is also true according to the Christian doctrine as Thomas stated:

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, overcoming man's contrariness to God; and through the Cross He has broken down all walls of partition among mankind, and united them into a unity in Christ.³⁴

This way the religious aspirations of people will be a great resource for them in their venture for social relief programmes.

Concentrating on Social Reform

Another important goal I would like to propose for the social change agents to work on is to concentrate on social reform. All major social problems have already proved the necessity for social reform or structural change. To keep up the equilibrium of our societies we require relevant and planned social change that would be lasting. We have already seen that social reform is essential in the fields of education, health services, land ownership, participatory involvement of the common people in community development programmes and in the organizations of

³²M. M. Thomas, The Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1976), p. 193.

³³Ibid., p. 142.

³⁴Ibid., p. 194.

the Government, working of the Employment Exchanges and the Public Service Commission, among others. What the social change agents should do is to concentrate in really changing the structures of the systems and institutions either directly or through the Government. At the close of the 3rd chapter we have studied how the youth would be able to innovate the churches in my diocese and to make use of them as centres of social change. But, the social reform I have then suggested for our churches to carry on was limited to the area of the parishes and was affecting the parish-members only. Here, I would like to state that the Christian youth who are working through the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations as social change agents should see that our churches would be joining with them in affecting relevant social reform in a wider sphere.

Gardner remarked:

As Christ's body, the Church is set in the midst of the world as a sign of the power of his reconciliation to free all men from every form of bondage and every power of evil. As his body, the Church is to continue his ministry of reconciliation, participate in his sufferings, and above all abound in works of love and service. In so far as it participates in Christ's victory over the powers of evil and receives its nourishment from him, it becomes a new humanity and the nucleus of a redeemed universe.³⁵

The social change agents are expected to bring forth social reform in various fields. But I would like to mention certain fields where social reform is especially essential. Certain structural changes are necessary in the field of education to ensure that at least primary education should be given to all children. Changes are also essential to see that the methods of education should be directed for vocation-

³⁵E. Clinton Gardner, The Church as a Prophetic Community (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 146-47.

oriented education. Educational agencies should be advised to give more importance to science subjects and mathematics. The change agents must be in contact with the heads of the educational institutions to see that proper discipline, character-formation, physical, mental and spiritual growth of children will be taking place in our educational institutions. Reform is also necessary to provide all the poor and deserving children with material necessities to continue their education. In certain cases the social change agents may influence the Government and the educational agencies through opinion-formation of the people in different strata of life and in other cases they may approach the Government directly for affecting structural changes. The change agents may also supplement what the Government is doing to improve the educational standard and the methods of education as a whole. It is stated very clearly:

If education - formal or informal - is indeed one of the keys to the liberation and development of people, it is high time that the Church rethought and re-oriented its educational enterprise in such a way that it ceases to support the Status quo and becomes a committed vehicle for social change.³⁶

The next important field where social reform is urgent is the field of health services. The hospitals, nursing homes and dispensaries run by our churches and social agencies should be directed to nurse especially the sick and the suffering who are very poor and who are not getting even the barest minimum health care. The change agents may support the Government in carrying out the programme of starting a hospital in every taluk by providing land, financial aid or buildings.

³⁶"The Church's Response ...," p. 39.

The Primary Health Centres, dispensaries, etc. have to be revitalized and new methods to be adopted for family planning. A thorough change is essential in our health organization so that trained doctors will be deputed to rural areas to give medical aid to the common people. Steps should be taken to educate people in rural areas, slum areas and hilly places on sanitation, balanced diet, hygienic way of cooking, use of safe drinking water, etc. to prevent diseases. The social change agents should raise the conscience of the common people on these lines and urge the Government and the Health Department to implement these reforms on the idea of health as public health. Supply of preventive medicine is also important. It is recommended:

People will not be just patients coming to the doctor or the hospital when they are ill; they would be actively working to prevent illness in themselves and the community through health education, civic service like protected water supply, good sanitation and drainage, programmes of immunisation and so on. The present health programme, which is largely curative in approach, needs to be reoriented in this way if it is to serve the ends of social justice.³⁷

A through change is very essential in land distribution pattern. A majority of the lands possessed by the land-lords have not yet been declared surplus. So, steps should be taken to take hold of excess lands from all land-lords according to the land ceiling laws and distribute them to the poor through the Taluk Land Boards. The social change agents should co-operate with the Government in redistributing the lands to the poor, the landless and the oppressed. Instead of using coercive methods in taking hold of excess lands, the social change agents may

³⁷Ibid., p. 40.

approach the concerned land-lords and convince them the necessity for donating the lands to the landless and the poor. Jayaprakash Narayan, Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party in 1946 stated:

No one shall be allowed to own land who does not reside in the village and actually till the land. The unit of agricultural economy would be the village. The legal ownership of land would rest with the village as a whole.³⁸

"The programme of settlement of such landless unemployed persons is a first priority in any programme of development."³⁹ The social change agents should support the Government in the programme of constructing one lakh houses for the homeless and at the same time encourage the rich and the land-lords to construct small houses to be donated to the poor. Change is essential in the mentality of the rich people in order to feel brotherly love towards the homeless people. The oppressed and the poor should feel their 'culture of silence' and as a consequence of the great change, they should play their role in taking possession of land and house. Alexander stated:

Therefore land reform on a rational basis is essential to stimulate agricultural productivity as well as to satisfy the land hunger of agricultural workers and give security to tenants.⁴⁰

Social reform has to take place in the participatory involvement of the common people in community development programmes and in the organizations of the Government. Ordinary people only very seldom get opportunities for decision-making events in community development programmes and they are not the beneficiaries of these programmes. Top

³⁸ Thomas, p. 42.

³⁹ Devanandan and Thomas, p. 79.

⁴⁰ Alexander, p. 17.

elites in communities, middle class people, officials of the Government and others should have a change of mind to give equal participation and benefit to the common and oppressed people. It is stated:

Recent pronouncements by the Government of India on the working of the Community Development Projects recognise that their limitations are due to a lack of public enthusiasm, absence of development consciousness and an indifference to co-operative endeavour.⁴¹

The social change agents, therefore, should venture for "fruitful co-operative action in terms of service co-operatives, industrial estates, co-operative credit societies, and even of co-operative farming."⁴² They might also work for a vital democracy that will issue in the full participation of the rich and the poor, men and women in the total life of society. Steps might be taken to direct the newly emerging leadership in the line of democratic social values so that the existing organizations like the Panchayat and the co-operatives would be able to take a leading part in the development programme. Change is very essential in the working of the Employment Exchanges and the Public Service Commission. Eligible and most deserving candidates may be recommended to these agencies for selection by the social change agents in every unit. They should very strongly fight against corruption and injustice in selecting candidates. I have only outlined some important aspects of social reform for the social change agents as their proposed goals of social change. It would be better for the change agents to go deep into these various aspects of social reform. They might also dive

⁴¹Devanandan and Thomas, p. 126.

⁴²Ibid.

into other areas of social reform. All these changes and reforms might be continuous so that the results would be lasting and far reaching into the different strata of society.

Evaluation

I have already proposed some of the important goals of social change. According to the present social, economic and political situation in our societies, these goals seem to be relevant and most appropriate. In affecting these goals certain important facts have to be taken care of. I have stated that the common and the oppressed people might be benefited through the implementation of these goals. Consciousness of these neglected people should be raised so as to make them feel that they are endowed with potentialities to set themselves free from the shackles of bondage and to thrive for progress. But, the social change agents should be very careful to see that the common people and the oppressed would not misuse these opportunities. They should not become parasites depending upon the mercy of the rich and the well-to-do. Extending financial and material aids should not make these people idle and lazy. Elliott stated:

But first the individual has to be liberated from his conception of himself as an object of a process, passively excluded from all decision-making. His awareness of himself as a creative and responsible being must be established, so that he may be liberated from his own servility.⁴³

The second point I want to make clear is that the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations should maintain their separate identity. It is

⁴³Charles Elliott, The Development Debate (London: SCM Press, 1971), p. 56.

true that people with diverse political and religious doctrines are members in these Associations. So, the tendency for these members will be to implement their doctrines in the working of these Associations. On the very outset this proceedure will favour one party over against others and disturb the smooth running of the Associations. On the one hand this will ruin the individuality of the members as social change agents and on the other hand this will make them to loose their authority to question the political parties and the religious institutions about their weaknesses and short-comings. My conclusion, therefore, is that the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations should not identify themselves with anyone political party and religious group. The change agents may take in the valuable and humanitarian doctrines of various religious and political groups and try to direct their goals on a synthesis of these doctrines. The essence in the following statement of Devanandan and Thomas concerning the functioning of the centres for the development of the cottage and small-scale industries is true here also. They remarked:

These centres have great opportunities if they are oriented to work interdenominationally with a total programme for the village community, and within the context of national extension and community development programmes, and utilizing all government facilities of technical aid and financial assistance.⁴⁴

Thomas stated it very clearly and without favouring any religious sect or political party as follows:

We want to seek the co-operation of one and all - Christians, men of other faith and men of no faith, in our all out radical

⁴⁴Devanandan and Thomas, p. 129.

effort to serve man to meet him at the point of his need, in the political, economic and cultural realms of life.⁴⁵

The third important fact that calls our attention is the necessity for frequent evaluations by the social change agents on their methods and goals of social change. After stating the means of approach, they must discuss within themselves to see whether the means would be justifiable to attain the goals. After covering each stage in the goals, the social change agents, through a committee on evaluation, should assess the percentage of the accomplishment of the goals covered so far, the number of beneficiaries and the short-comings and failures. This critical evaluation will enable the change agents to correct their short-comings and failures and move on to the next stage in the goals.

Along with this I would like state that conflict might be anticipated and dealt with creatively. Democratic method of handling issues and finding out solutions will be a creative way of dealing with conflicts. Conflict may be classified as intrapersonal, interpersonal and substantive. The positive functions of conflict are empowerment, establishing identity, unifying the ingroup and bearing the intolerable. But, the change agents should note that inadequate handling of conflicts might cause schisms. In order to minimize conflicts, the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations should not interfere in the administration of the respective bodies those are members in these Associations. "One mark of a healthy organization is that it can deal with conflict when it arises

⁴⁵M. A. Thomas, "The Problem of Being Christian," in Relevance, Christian Youth Organizations in India Today (Bangalore: Ecumenical Christian Centre, 1971), p. 9.

and that the conflict can bring with it growth."⁴⁶

Finally, I would like to pin point the specific role of the churches in my diocese in general and that of the Youth Fellowships in particular in the process of social change. We have already stated that the innovated churches ought to be the centres from where social change might spring up. We have also studied how the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala might be directed for relevant and planned social change. So, during the process of social change these two important facts should not be neglected. Ruether stated very clearly what the role of our churches ought to be. She declared:

The church should relate to society, not by being co-opted by it to sanctify the status quo, nor simply withdraw from it in isolated purity, but rather the proper relationship of church to society is dialectical. The church should stand in the midst of conventional society, but not be 'of it,' but rather be the place where a significantly new humanity, functioning in a communitarian and non-explosive way, is begun.⁴⁷

With this principle our churches would become innovative centres of social change and might foster the ongoing process of relevant and planned change. Moreover, the Christians who are members in the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations must discharge their duties as social change agents in the Christian understanding of service to humanity. They should follow the example of Jesus Christ in fighting for justice, equality and the liberation of the oppressed and the down-trodden. This exemplary work of the Christian members, especially the

⁴⁶Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus, Church Fights: Managing Conflict in the Local Church (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 159.

⁴⁷Ruether, pp. 154-55.

youth, will have a great bearing in the general functioning of these Associations. "For Christians to engage in such action without a sense of divine mandate and hope of fulfillment is both illogical and enervating."⁴⁸ Christians are motivated to love and service to the poor and the oppressed by the spirit of Jesus who said:

. . . for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.⁴⁹

But, at any cost they should not impose these Christian principles on other members. Their mode of participation in the Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations is guided by the Christian principles of love and service and becomes an example for other members to follow. They ought to show that the Christian youth organizations "can forge new programmes to help the Christian community to be creatively involved in the radical movements for social change."⁵⁰ Such programmes can contribute to the attainment of the goals of social change. But we might very well remember that Ruether was fully correct when she stated:

⁴⁸Georgia Harkness, Stability and Change (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 140.

⁴⁹Mt. 25: 35-36.

⁵⁰J. R. Chandran, "Service in a Pluralistic Society," in Relevance, Christian Youth Organizations in India Today, p. 36.

Thus the youth of today do not struggle against mere flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities, against cosmic forces so huge and so deeply entrenched that their removal by any puny efforts of mere humans seems impossible. No wonder that their efforts often seem so desperate and prone to 'extremism,' for the struggle is indeed one of desperation and ultimate extremes, and those who struggle are often very young, only recently awakened to the existence of evil in the world, and woefully deserted by their guilty elders.⁵¹

⁵¹Ruether, p. 35.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The global community in the latter part of the 20th century is passing through complex developmental crises. Human life in its 'image of God' and 'crown of creation' ceases to be of any meaning for two-thirds of humanity in India and in the State of Kerala. Hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, population explosion, injustice and inequality in fields like education, health facilities and land ownership are always threatening the physical existence of a vast majority of people in our societies. The result is that we are part of an impoverished humanity and a threatened biosphere. Have these critical issues and nearly paralyzing problems become matters of inner struggle and of expanding the call of the church in the Diocese of North Kerala? We are a part of the call, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."¹ How far have the young people in my diocese succeeded in responding to this call? "Burning Bush" is to be a glowing experience in the life of every one of us, as it was for Moses in hearing the command of God to relieve the agony of humanity and to set His people free. Who will act as social change agents in a relevant and planned social change guided by the Christian principle of love and service to humanity?

The first phase of my project is concerning the young generation of today. The young people in our churches and societies seem to be irresponsible, revolutionary, disobedient and lazy. Parents and adults often criticize them for being too critical, destructive, careless to

¹Mt. 4:19.

truths and victims of bad habits. The young people themselves feel that they are neglected and condemned as worthless by the society. Even though they are endowed with inborn talents, creativity and enthusiasm, they are not encouraged to express their gifts. They are not given opportunities to express their deep human needs. In the light of these facts I have put forward some relevant questions as a person who is interested in the welfare of young people. In order to answer these questions, I have described the origin and development of the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala with a background study on the Church of South India and the nation in general. This has helped me to assess the objectives and the life and work of the diocesan youth ministry before and after the union in 1947. It is made clear that the youth ministry in the diocese has got a new organization and outlook since 1947. Yet a comparative study of the youth ministry with that of other Christian denominations has drawn a clear picture of our ministry especially in the field of social witness. An evaluation of the youth ministry has thus pointed out to the strengths and shortcomings of the ministry. Spirituality and creativity are very much lacking in our youth. Genuine participation in community development programmes and in social witness is very negligible. The objectives, life and work of the youth ministry are not at all capable of withstanding the modern trends in society and contributing something to the progress of society. The young people of today are the backbone of the church and the nation. The future of mankind is in their hands. So, it is imperative that the youth ministry in my diocese cannot be left as it is. It has to be revitalized to make the young people creative enough for shaping the future of the church

and the nation. The strengths of the youth ministry are sufficient that this ministry in my diocese could be revitalized. In the second half of chapter 2, I have analyzed the basic causes for shortcomings. I have then discussed in detail four important methods of revitalization. These methods could revitalize the existing youth ministry satisfactorily. The youth ministry could be fully equipped to meet its own needs and the needs of the church and society.

After recreating the youth ministry in the Diocese of North Kerala, I proposed to channel the creativity of the youth into useful projects beginning with the social field of the churches in the diocese. I have discussed in detail what should be the role of the church in society in chapter 3. Then I have analyzed the existing forms of social witness in our churches in the light of the study on the relationship between church and society. This was followed by an evaluation to assess the strengths and the failures of the existing social witness. This evaluation has proved very clearly that our churches were far behind concerning social witness. It was very obvious that an innovation within our churches was essential, and I have explained the necessity for innovation. So, my proposition was that our young people could be the right persons for innovating the churches. Then, I have put forward the methods and goals of innovation for the youth to work as innovators. It was also suggested that the young people could work along with the adults in a co-operative spirit and that the gap of understanding between these two groups could be bridged. Taking into consideration the important role of the church in society, I have suggested that the innovated churches could be the centres from which social

change might spring up and spread through out the societies.

The second phase of my project is dealing with the societies, in which our churches are part and parcel, in their social, economic and political issues. In chapter 4, I have classified almost all these issues that have threatened the equilibrium of our societies and have explained their consequences also. The consequences are so severe that disorganization has crept into the life of individuals, families and societies. Almost all these issues are inter-related and cause great chaos in the smooth running of our societies. Natural evolution and planned changes are happening in every society. But, they are not able to keep up the equilibrium of our societies and new issues are coming up. In the light of these I strongly felt an urgency for relevant and planned social change to give serious consideration to the agony of the poor and the oppressed and to set them free. I have also tried to establish that only a planned social change could really change the structures of systems and institutions, eradicate the social, economic and political ills and bring about organization in every walk of life.

I have set apart chapter 5 to study how a relevant and planned social change could be worked out and who would be the social change agents. Moreover I wanted to see which would be the next useful project into which I could channel the creativity of the revitalized youth. Coupling these two aspects, I have proposed to direct the youth ministry for relevant and planned social change. This is in effect an advanced sphere of work for the youth beyond my earlier suggestion that they work in their respective churches for innovation in the social field. For the efficient working of the youth as social change agents, I have

suggested certain useful methods such as organizing Inter-Socio-Cultural Associations, and through them utilizing a wide range of available resources for change. I have also pointed out certain important goals of social change. The proposed goals were designed to resolve on social, economic and political ills in our societies. Here I have followed the line of thought of Paulo Freire wherein he has developed the idea of conscientization in "making the church and society aware of the prevalent socio-economic realities, and of sensitizing different sections in the church and society to the need for social change and to their responsibilities in this matter."² I have defined definite steps for the social change agents to work for social relief programmes and to concentrate on social reform. I have tried my best to make sure that the oppressed people would more likely decide to take upon themselves, with the oppressed, the struggle to change the structures of society that until then had served to oppress them. I wanted to emphasize the fact that lasting social reform was essential besides social relief in our societies and that the Christian youth should play their role as social change agents with utmost sincerity. The guiding principle should be the exemplary life of Jesus Christ filled with love and service to mankind.

²"Sociology, Economics and Politics in the Service of India's War on Poverty," Religion and Society, XXII, 3 (September 1975), 67.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

DIOCESAN YOUTH MINISTRY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: The Secretary of the Youth Fellowship is requested to answer the questions after considering the opinions of the members. The Pastor may advise them wherever necessary.

- I
1. (a) Name of the Youth Fellowship
 - (b) Total baptized members in the Parish:
 - (c) Total young people :Male: Female:
 2. (a) Total membership of the Youth Fellowship: Male: Female:
 - 1) Teen-agers (16-19 years) " "
 - 2) Adults (20-35 ") " "
 - b) Senior friends of the Fellowship " "
 - c) Probationary members (13-15 years) " "
 3. a) Number of permanently employed youth " "
 - b) " " temporarily " " " "
 - c) " " unemployed youth " "
 - d) " " students " "
- II.
1. How often does the Fellowship meet?
 2. a) What objectives do you have in meeting? (Mark the applicable ones)
 - 1) Study of the Scripture
 - 2) Learning hymns and songs
 - 3) Hearing talks from different persons related to the field of Christian Education
 - 4) Presenting and discussing various literary items that have Christian morals
 - 5) Discussing the relevant role of the youth in the Parish
 - 6) Knowing one another intimately
 - 7) Having fellowship and fun
 - 8) Hearing persons from different fields of life
 - 9) Discussing the current social issues
 - 10) Discussing the relevant role of the Youth in Society
 - 11) Understanding the Scripture in the present social, economic and political situations
 - 12)

13)

14)

(Add any other objectives you have)

b) 1. Which of them are being fulfilled?

Put the numbers:

2. Which of them do you feel most relevant:

Put the number(s):

3. Do you give special attention to any of these in your meetings? If so, put the number(s):

4. Which of them are being neglected?

Relevant:

Irrelevant:

3. a) What methods do you follow in attaining the objectives in meetings? (Mark four applicable ones)

1. Teacher - student
2. Discussion in general
3. Discussion in small groups
4. Panel discussion
5. Dialogue
6. Role-playing
- 7.
- 8.

(Add your own)

b) Which method do you consider

Best:

Better:

Good:

Satisfactory:

4. a) What activities does the Youth Fellowship do? (Mark five applicable ones)

1. Helps the Pastor to run the Sunday Schools
2. Helps the church during festivals
3. Involves in the routine activities of the church
4. Attends youth conferences
5. Participates in helping the charitable institutions of the diocese
6. Gives financial aid to the poor students in the congregation
7. Runs adult education classes for the Christians and non-Christians of the lower classes

8. Participates creatively in the land reforms of the Government
9. Takes initiative in constructing houses for the home-less
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

(Add your own)

- b) Name three main activities you would like to concentrate during the coming two years

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- III.1. a) How many members do actually attend the meetings?
- | | |
|------|--------|
| Male | Female |
|------|--------|

- b) What percentage of the total youth of the congregation does attend the meetings?

2. If the percentage of those attending youth meetings and participating in various activities of the Fellowship is not satisfactory, the reasons being:
(Mark the ten applicable ones)

1. Simply not interested in religious activities
2. Protest against the church and Fellowship authorities
3. Lack of competent local and central youth workers
4. Leader's incapability to present the Christian message to the life situations of the members
5. Misconception about the validity of religious ideas
6. Negligence of the parents in religious activities
7. Stereotyped programmes and activities of the Fellowship
8. Lack of interest in personality development
9. Lack of opportunities for creative thinking and working
10. Non-recognition of one another's potentialities and capacities
11. Lack of mutual trust and intimate relationship
12. Lack of recreational activities
13. Lack of concern towards social, economic and political issues
14. Affinity towards false leaders outside the Fellowship
15. Poverty and unemployment
16. No planning to be involved in community development programmes
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.

(Add your own)

3. What methods would you suggest to overcome these failures?

(Mark the seven applicable ones)

1. Cultivate an understanding between the authorities of the church and the members of the Fellowship by mutual sharing
2. Use the most preferable and attractive method during the meetings
3. Try to go deep into the feelings of the members
4. Encourage mutual sharing of leadership in small groups
5. Try to relate the Scripture to the life situations of the members
6. Help the members to achieve value-clarification through simulations, games etc.
7. Encourage them to express their opinions in the current social, political and economic issues
8. Give opportunities for everyone to develop his or her potentialities and appreciate one another's talents
9. Plan varieties of activities for the Fellowship
10. Invite resource persons to speak on various subjects
- 11.
- 12.

(Add your own)

IV a. What should be the relationship of the Church to the society?

1. Indifference to the society and its issues
2. A ~~creative~~ involvement in recreating the society
3. Tendency to conform to the society without a critical and Christian outlook

(Mark the suitable one)

b. What, in your opinion, are the current social, economic and political issues? (Mark in ten suitable ones)

1. Juvenile delinquency
2. Crime and white-collar criminalities
3. ~~Alcoholism and use of drugs~~
4. Smoking and gambling
5. Prostitution and adultery
6. Beggary
7. Poverty and unemployment
8. Population explosion
9. Health deficiencies
10. Illiteracy and lack of adult education
11. Unsatisfactory education on social, moral and spiritual values
12. Non-availability of varieties of participatory recreational activities
13. Emergence of numerous political parties
14. Corruption among politicians
15. Disunity among family members

- 16.
- 17.
- 18.

(Add your own)

- c. How far the Youth Fellowship can be a social change agent in eradicating these ills in the society? (Mark one)

1. Not at all
2. To some extent
3. To a greater extent
4. To the maximum possible extent

- d. In what ways the youth can be social change agents?
(Mark four suitable ones)

1. In renewing the socially oriented activities of the church
2. In creating new programmes for literacy campaign and adult education
3. In giving health education and medicine to most needy people in the area
4. In cooperating with the community development programmes
5. In participating in relief and charitable activities from time to time
6. In uplifting the conditions of the poor through various programmes, one by one according to need
7. In understanding the reaction of the common people on the policies of the Govt. and informing their opinion to the Govt. officials
- 8.
- 9

(Add your own)

- c) How will you act as social change agents?
(Mark three suitable ones)

1. Through the innovated church, innovated by the youth
2. Through the renovated Youth Fellowship
3. Through an 'inter-faith association' formed by the initiative of the youth for social change
4. With the help of other associations in the society
5. Through the ruling political party
- 6.
- 7

(Add your own)

- V. a) What do the members think about Jesus Christ? (Mark only one)

1. A religious teacher
2. A radical reformer
3. Personal Saviour

4. Reconciler of the whole humanity to God and to one another

b) How do you interpret the Christian calling? (Mark three suitable ones)

- 1) Requires us to live an isolated life
 - 2) Requires us to contemplate purely on the 'other worldliness' of life
 - 3) Requires us to identify ourselves with the standards of society
 - 4) Requires us to participate in religious activities
(Eg. Divine service, prayer meetings, study of the Scripture, etc.)
 - 5) Requires us to practise the reconciling message of Jesus Christ in the complex issues of society
 - 6) Requires us to witness the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.
 - 7)
 - 8)
- (Add your own)

:

B. THE MAP OF KERALA STATE
Showing
DISTRICTS

Scale : 1 cm = 23 km



